

JULY 1898.

NEW SERIES. PART XXI.

THE

LEISURE HOUR



AMERIGO VESPUCCI.

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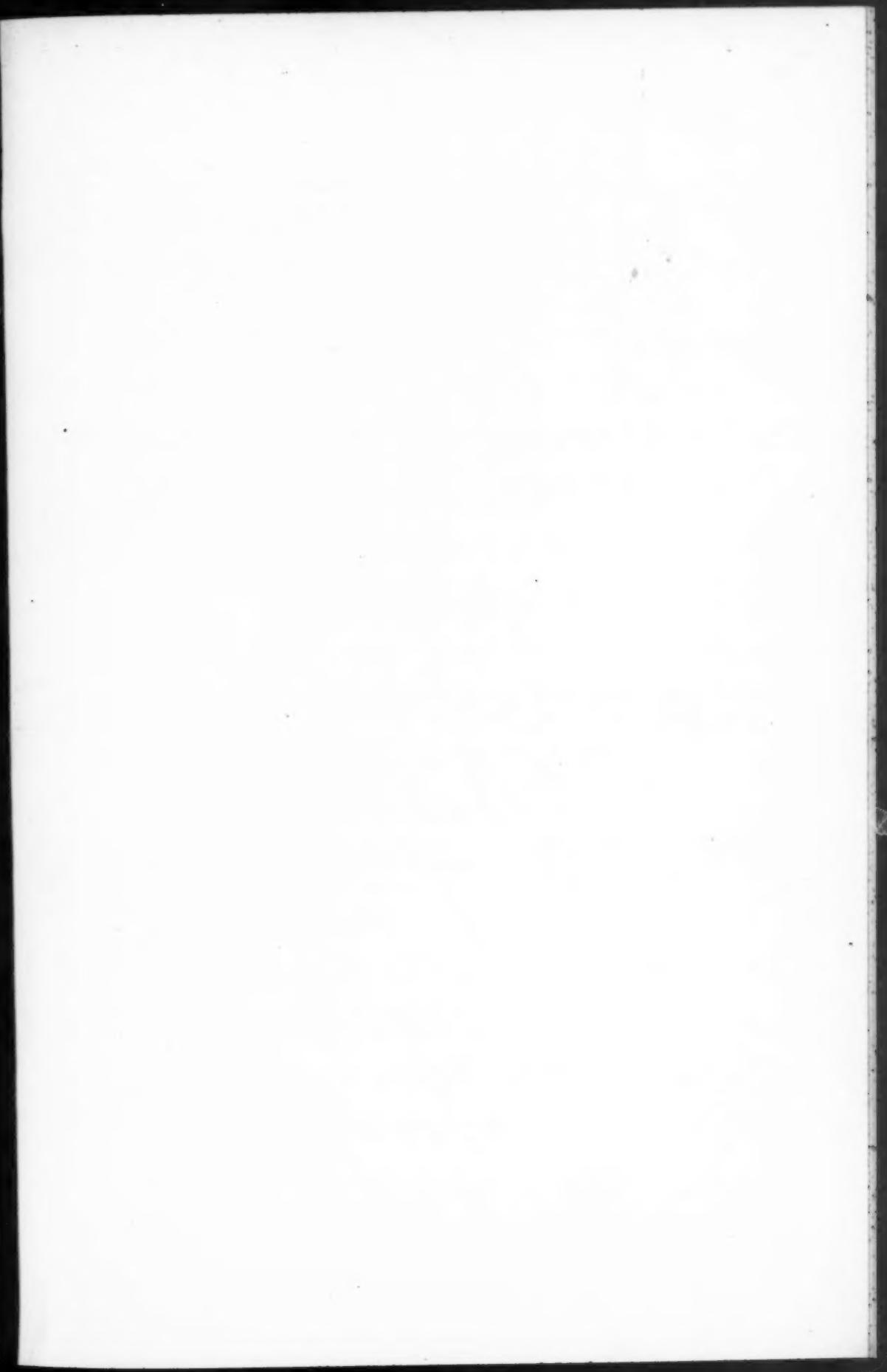
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From the Picture by Adolph Menzel

DRIFTWOOD.

BY MARY E. PALGRAVE.



NEWS FOR OLIVER

CHAPTER XXVI.—“BRING FORTH THE BEST ROBE.”

“O LIVER! Oliver!” cried Katharine, flying to meet her husband as the sound of his latch-key was heard in the door, “I’ve got such a piece of news for you! Come into the study, and I will tell you what it is.”

Graham followed obediently, and found a bright fire blazing and his big chair drawn into inviting proximity to it. Small attentions like these had been lavished on him of late, and he was mutely grateful for them, for another crisis had arisen in South American affairs, and

his firm was going through a period of great risk and anxiety. It meant working early and late, and straining every nerve to steer the business safely through the shoal waters. Graham often came home anxious and dispirited, and sometimes was so completely worn out that his wife felt anxious about him.

He looked white and tired enough to-night, as a moment’s glance revealed; and poor Katharine’s heart smote her at the thought that she must be the one to add to his burdens. But there was no help for it—Maidie was coming home to-morrow, and her brother must

be prepared for her advent. The best she could do was to tell her painful story as lightly as possible and treat Marjory's home-coming as the most natural and ordinary of occurrences.

"Sit down, old boy, and get warm. How cold you look!" she said, pushing him gently into the big chair and taking her favourite place on the hearthrug at his feet. The fire-light danced on her fair, delicate face, enhancing its pink and white, and making the little rings of hair on her forehead shine like threads of gold. Some excitement had brightened her dark grey eyes, and her lips were half smiling, half sad. She was more, far more, to-night, like the happy, lively, Katharine of old than her husband had seen her since the fatal day which quenched her happiness and turned her from a girl into a woman. She was the old Katharine once more—with an ineffable something added.

"I've got so much to tell you," she said, trying—not quite successfully—to assume her most cheerful and ordinary demeanour, "but first, can't you guess what it is about? Something we have been wishing for *very* much has come to pass!"

Katharine laid her hand on her husband's knee and looked up, smiling, in his face. But the response she expected did not come. Oliver was staring into the fire, with a worried haggard look that seemed to trace cares and anxieties in the glowing coals. Business concerns had been so paramount with him of late that everything else had slipped into the background. And to-night, when things in the City were looking especially black, and to-morrow's turn of the wheel might mean ruin to Mackenzie, Sedge, and Graham, the junior partner might be pardoned for being able to think of nothing as desirable save release from the burden of present cares.

"I've no notion, dear," he said, in a dull voice, letting his hand fall nervelessly on his wife's soft fingers.

For a moment Katharine's lips quivered. It needed all her courage to go on.

"Dear," she said, after a moment's pause, "I know you are worried and anxious, but this is something quite of another sort—something which has to do only with you and me. Listen! You know where I was going this afternoon—over the North London Union Workhouse with Miss Lindesay? Well, I went—and whom do you think I found there? Now can't you guess, Oliver?"

Graham was roused at last. His wife felt his indifferent fingers tremble and clench themselves on hers with a grasp that was almost painful. The colour came into his face, and his eyes kindled. They sought Katharine's with an eager, anxious gaze. "Whom you found there? Not—not *Maidie*, Katharine? In the workhouse? Oh, impossible!"

"No, not impossible, dear." Katharine met his dismay with a clear, brave smile, and kept her voice firmly under control. "Miss Lindesay

has told me such strange stories of the people she has found in the workhouse—barristers, and artists, and more than one peer's son, and others equally unlikely. And if men, why not women too? Listen, and I'll tell you all about it."

Katharine described her visit and the first sight of Marjory, in fullest detail. Oliver could almost see the pauper artist standing among her handiwork—the painted lilies and roses and tender baby faces that looked so innocent and bright, such strange creations for their surroundings and circumstances. He could discern something of the tingling, overpowering shock that it had been to Katharine to discover who the painter was, though of the struggle it had cost her to acknowledge her discovery and act upon it she said little. She merely owned, with a smile, that just for a minute it had been hard to make up her mind what to do for the best.

"I pulled Miss Lindesay aside and told her I knew something of—that person," Katharine continued, "and asked if I might stay behind and have a little talk with her. She didn't seem a bit surprised, but called the matron away and left us together."

Maidie's sorrowful story of her life for the last two years came as gently as possible from Katharine's lips. Still, softened as it might be, it was deplorable enough, and Oliver's face showed plainly that he felt it intensely. At the mention of his old nurse's death his eyes filled with tears.

"The faithful old soul!" he said huskily. "How she stuck to Maidie to the last! And when she knew well enough that one line to me would have ensured her being comfortably provided for! But I believe she would sooner have starved with Marjory than live like a queen away from her. I never knew such devotion! I do think, if only for *her* sake, Maidie might have condescended to appeal to me."

"I don't think old Sally suffered, Oliver. Maidie entreated me to believe, and to tell you, that Sally had everything she needed to the very last. It was bronchitis she died of, Marjory said, during those fogs we had towards the end of October. Her illness only lasted a week."

"Well, it was her own choice," returned Oliver with a heavy sigh. "And if faithfulness is a virtue, old Sally will stand high at the last day."

"Oh, I am *sure* she will," responded Katharine eagerly. "Do you know, I think she did more than anybody to keep your sister—steady. Poor Maidie must have been shamefully treated by some man to whom she had become engaged; he jilted her, and she evidently felt it intensely—I expect it has done more to harden her and make her reckless than anything else. And when she was so desolate, old Sally's love was such a treasure to Maidie, and she was someone still to live and work for. It is only since she died that Marjory gave

up the struggle to be independent and came to—where I found her."

Graham rested his haggard face in his hands.

"What *is* to be done?" he said presently. "She can't, in common decency, be left where she is; but whither on earth can we send her that she will consent to go? And who would undertake such a troublesome charge? I don't know what *is* to be done for her!" His voice rang hollow with distress and perplexity, and with his bowed shoulders and hidden face he looked the picture of dejection.

But Katharine, still bravely smiling, put up her hand and touched his forehead. "Dear, don't look like that," she said, gently. "There's always *some* way out of difficulties, you know! And this one is simple enough, my silly old boy—she is to come *here*, of course! Isn't it the obvious thing to do with her? To me there was no question about it."

Oliver had lifted his head and was staring at his wife. "Nonsense, Katharine!" he cried, almost roughly. "Maidie to come *here*, to *you*, straight from the workhouse? The thing's impossible."

"No, indeed, it *isn't*," pursued Katharine steadily. "It mayn't be *convenient*, perhaps, but it is certainly not impossible! In fact, it seems to me the only thing to be done. You are Marjory's one near relation, and so, naturally, your home would be hers when she has none of her own."

Oliver shook his head doggedly. "You don't know what it means," he said. "I tell you it's out of the question."

Katharine was not to be daunted. "We shall see," she answered, with that bright, clear look of hers. "And, Oliver, it is too late to discuss it, for—do you see?—it is all settled. Marjory will be here to-morrow. I invited her to come and gave her money to come with, and made her faithfully promise she wouldn't fail."

"You—*didn't*!" cried Oliver, drawing a long breath, astonishment written on every line of his face. "Katharine, I could never have believed it!" And then, under his breath, he added, "God bless you for it."

"I've prepared Susan," went on Katharine, rather hurriedly. "I didn't *say* it would be the same lady who—who came here before, but I think she guessed. But she was *so* nice, Oliver, and so understanding, and she promised to explain to cook, and I'm not a bit afraid that there will be difficulties on the score of the servants. I am sure they will treat Marjory as your sister. And her room is to be got ready by ten o'clock, in case she comes early. I'm going to put her—where do you think? In the night nursery. You won't mind, I hope?" Katharine's brave voice faltered for a moment, and her lips trembled. Her husband could not trust himself to speak, but he took her little twitching fingers in both his hands. "I thought it would be more homely, somehow, than the spare-room; and besides, I have a fancy, Noll, that our little Daisy's play-

things, and her cot, and the pictures we put up for her, will all speak, in their way, to poor Marjory, and help her to want to be good. She cried so bitterly, dear, about our baby's death; it was the first thing which drew us together. I am sure she has a very tender heart underneath."

"Yes, I believe she has—when she gives it a chance."

"It will help her to feel at home, to have that room for her own," Katharine repeated, lingeringly. "And we couldn't give her a truer welcome, or show her more plainly that she is to be one of ourselves, than by putting her *there*, could we, Oliver?"

"No, indeed, my darling. It can't fail to touch her." Graham had to make an effort to keep his voice steady.

"I know I ought to have asked your leave to bring Marjory here, before I said anything to her," was Katharine's next remark, spoken after a long pause. "But somehow, when I once had made up my mind to speak to her at all, there seemed no question about it. It seemed so clear that it was the *right* thing to do. And do you know, Oliver, I believe it was simply my asking her straight away, without any—apparent—hesitation, that won her at all. She was so much touched and surprised; it quite melted her heart. If I had hesitated and looked doubtful, and said I must ask your leave, I don't believe she would have agreed to come. It would have set her pride in arms. It was like storming a breach, Noll; her citadel had to be taken by assault or not at all!"

"Yes, I have no doubt of it," assented Oliver heartily. "*Bis dat qui cito dat!*—It seems to me that that proverb has, in some cases, a higher application than one had thought for. All honour to you, dear heart, for your speedy, generous giving!"

"Then you don't think me very foolish?" whispered Katharine, drawing closer to her husband.

He glanced at her, half laughing; but there was reverence in his look as well as amusement. "It may be foolish, child, from a worldly point of view, but it is nothing short of—divine. It is Christ's own work that you are taking into your hands, my dear."

"Or that He is giving me, rather," said Katharine in a low voice, with a quick lifting of her eyes to meet her husband's. Was it the mist in his own that made her face so lovely? Or was it the light of goodness—of the compassion that puts all self aside to help another soul—shining in her eyes and making her lips so tender? Oh, we get very weary, sometimes, of human nature as we know it in ourselves and others. It is so petty and hard judging; so quick to condemn; so slow to believe in good motives; so little generous and large hearted and encouraging. Those who cheer and stimulate, who uplift and strengthen their brethren, are so few. But, now and then, we find a flower of self-sacrifice springing up in

some unlooked-for corner ; we are allowed to see some impatient soul growing patient, some unloving character loving. We catch a glimpse of some life of self-devotion being lived where there are—

"None to praise
And very few to love."

By our own efforts and longings, however fitful, after greater love for our brethren and clearer perception of the way to help them, we learn to recognise the same desire in others. And so we find that God's Spirit is moving among us still ; " His work goes on and slacketh not." Every day souls are being kindled ; the divine spark is flashed from one to another. Under all weakness and feebleness, in spite of faults and follies and mistakes, there is in all of us who have not set our faces deliberately against Him the Spirit of God. We are striving upwards to the Light. The image of God, however slowly, is being formed in us. Deeds are being done, every day, in this dark world which have the light of heaven in them ; words are being spoken which are gracious and consoling and sincere ; men and women are learning to forget themselves and to live after the pattern which Christ has set. Human lives, and the love shed from human hearts, are still—God be thanked for it—"Earth's best witness to the life Divine."

Oliver Graham put his wife aside, with a touch that was reverent in its gentleness, and went away upstairs to his dressing-room and locked himself in.

CHAPTER XXVII.—AN END AND A BEGINNING.

IN every moment of high impulse and keen emotion there is the merely human element to be allowed for—the glow of excitement which contact with another soul gives, and which is bound to fade. The inevitable reaction must follow, and must be reckoned with.

On the following morning Graham, man like, was disposed to look very darkly upon his wife's enterprise.

" You will never make anything of her, Kit," he groaned, in discouraging accents. " You have no notion how reckless she is, or what perpetual excitement she wants. If you had known her in the Eccleston Square days, when she was a mere child who had never been into society at all and yet was as pining and discontented as a bird in a cage—always longing after what she called her ' liberty'—you wouldn't be so plucky about taking her in hand. And of course she will be a hundred times worse now, after her years of roaming. It is not as if we were going out ourselves, or, if we were, as if we could take *her*. I can't see how it will be possible to introduce her to a soul we know ! "

" Oh, Oliver, how impatient you are ! " cried Katharine, from behind the tea-kettle, where she was making breakfast. " What is the use of

looking so far ahead ? That question can be left to settle itself when it comes. ' A day at a time ' is to be my motto with Marjory. I mean to be very patient, and try and think of her as a sick child who must be humoured and yet—managed ! And, do you know, my impression is that she is as ill as she can be, and that the first thing I shall have to do will be to nurse her. Why, her hands alone were enough to tell the tale. When you see them, you will be as much appalled as I was. And her cough was incessant. My belief is that we shall find her thankful to lie still and be petted for many weeks to come."

" Well, I only wish it may be so," returned Graham despondently. " But I own I don't feel hopeful about it. And to think it is all through *me* that such a task has fallen upon you ! It makes me savage."

No further response came, at the moment, from Katharine ; but when her husband had finished his breakfast and she was helping him to put on his coat in the hall, she said, very gently :

" Noll, I was thinking, this morning, over those words of St. Paul's—' Hope maketh not ashamed'—and that they might teach us how to help Maidie. We must make her hopeful about herself by being hopeful for her. If you could only have seen how hopeless and despairing she looked yesterday, when I first spoke to her ! And then, when—I think—she saw that I really meant her to come home to us and make a fresh start, just a faint dawn of brightness began to lighten on her poor downcast face. I think she began to believe it possible that she could make a fresh start—that it was not so utterly hopeless for her, after all. And ' hope maketh not ashamed'—doesn't that mean, Oliver, that it won't play us false—that we shall not be disappointed of it ? Your sister will be rescued, dear ; she won't be lost. We may fail over it, but God won't. He is seeking the poor lost sheep in the wilderness, ' until He find it.' "

Katharine whispered those last words, leaning against her husband with her face hidden from him. He could feel her breath coming and going and the soft caress of her hair against his cheek.

" I'm an ungrateful coward, Kit—that's what it is," he said hoarsely. " I'm unworthy of my wife. If anybody can save her, it will be *you*, my dear. You make me ashamed of being so faint-hearted. God bless you. I will be home at the very earliest moment I can."

" And you will treat her kindly and—hopefully ? "

" Yes, yes, indeed I will. I should be a brute to do otherwise, when *you* are taking it like this."

After her husband's departure Katharine flew upstairs, to see that the bedroom intended for Marjory looked as inviting as was possible. With her own hands she put the finishing touches, and as a last thought went out and bought a little bunch of Christmas roses to

adorn the dressing-table. The pure white flowers, with their innocent faces and the touch of pink at the backs of their petals, reminded her of those other homely blossoms from which her own little one had taken her pet name, and of the sweet Daisy-flower herself, now blooming in the Lord's other garden. There was her crib in the corner, and her high chair set, empty and straight, against the wall. Till lately, Daisy's doll had lain upon the cot pillow, where she had always chosen to have it when she went to sleep, and where it had been placed ready for her on that last evening of her baby life ; but it was gone now—gone to make the delight of Balaclava Avering's heart in the kitchen in Malford Street.

Katharine's eyes filled with tears while her fingers lingered over the flowers ; and a bright drop or two fell on their pure petals. But they were tears like that spring rain which "maketh the earth bring forth and bud ;" and though she wondered still at her Father's dealing thus with her, her heart no longer rebelled.

When all was as well ordered in the little clean quiet room as her hands could make it, Katharine sped downstairs again, and took up her position in the drawing-room window, from whence, as we remember, a long view was commanded up the street. Malford Street was at its emptiest ; the children were at school, and there was never much wheeled traffic to impede the view. Maidie's approach would be visible from afar, whether she came in a cab or—as was more likely—on foot.

So the morning dragged by, half-hour after half-hour. Katharine tried by turns to read and to write, but found it impossible to settle to any occupation for more than five minutes at a time. Every distant figure that she caught sight of, every cab that came down Malford Street, set her heart beating. The sound of Big Ben striking twelve came booming up from Westminster on the wings of an easterly wind, making her start and drop her work, while she strained her eyes to peer more searching still into the foggy distance of the street. It was the hour by which Maidie had promised to appear.

Luncheon time came, and the place which had been set for Maidie was empty. Katharine could scarcely make a pretence of eating. Her mind was beginning to misgive her. After the meal was over she could no longer find the courage to watch from the window, but sat, chilly and depressed, by the fire, keeping her ears alert for the sound of the door-bell.

When Graham reached home, which he managed to do soon after four o'clock, and let himself into the house, some instinct told him that the prodigal had not returned. He sprang upstairs, two steps at a time, and burst into the drawing-room—to find his wife crouching in the corner of the sofa, and crying as if her heart would break.

"She has not come, Oliver !—oh, she has not come !" she sobbed out. Her husband took

her in his arms and let her cry herself quiet there.

Another hour passed, and still there was no sign of the wanderer. Oliver and Katharine had taken their tea dismally together. It seemed useless to wait for the chance of Maidie's arrival to share it with them.

Katharine was lying on the sofa, looking utterly worn out, and Oliver was standing moodily by the fire, kicking at the coals with the toe of his boot, as was his wont in moments of extreme perturbation. He seemed to be trying to make up his mind to face some painful task.

"Katharine," he said at last—speaking so abruptly that his wife started up and looked nervously at the door—"I've made up my mind. It is useless waiting any longer. I must go to the workhouse and fetch Marjory away. I shall probably have to say she is a relative, and give her real name, but that can't be helped. I expect she remembers the way we last parted, and can't make up her mind to face me ; but if I see her, I shall be able, I trust, to persuade her to come with me."

"If you go, Oliver, I shall go with you," replied Katharine, sitting up and speaking with determination. She looked pitifully tired, and her eyelids were swollen and reddened with crying.

"No, no, dear ! I can't have you come. You don't look fit for anything. You must lie quiet and be ready to receive her—if she comes."

But Katharine had made up her mind. "No, Oliver," she said, rising and standing beside her husband, "I can't let you go alone—indeed I can't. And I shall only be wretched and go on crying if I stay here waiting and watching. Do, please, let me come with you."

So Katharine had her way, and the husband and wife set forth together through the London streets, on which the winter darkness and chill had fallen long ago. It was a long, weary pilgrimage, even in a hansom cab, to the suburban regions of North London ; and Oliver and his wife had time for many sad and doubtful thoughts, as they drove through street after street of dull, respectable houses, occasionally varied by a stratum of shops. What would they find at their journey's end ? Katharine, hopeful still, clung to the belief that only want of courage and of confidence in their good intentions towards her was holding Maidie back. They would certainly find her waiting for them. When her brother and sister appeared, and told her they had come to fetch her, she would take heart of grace and come with them thankfully.

So Katharine thought, and so she told her husband, laying her hand on his arm and smiling into his gloomy face.

"Yes, very likely she will," he answered, reluctant to damp her hopes ; but in his heart he thought otherwise. There was something elusive about Maidie, something of the quality of a will-o'-the-wisp. He should believe they

had got her when he saw her within his own doors—not before!

The North London Union Workhouse was reached at last, and they alighted at its yellow brick gateway. Katharine, perhaps, had half expected to see Maidie standing where she had parted from her on the previous afternoon, just inside the porter's lodge, for a blank look came over her face when no tall, slight figure was visible to meet her eager gaze. She hung back a little behind her husband as he entered the side gate communicating with the porter's office. A burly official appeared and asked what their business might be.

"Took her discharge?—do you mean she left?" asked Katharine's bewildered voice. Oliver did not speak, and she did not dare look at his face.

"Well, mum, that's what it commonly do mean," responded the porter, who was of a jovial sort though his lines were not cast in the cheerfulest places of the earth.

"What time did she go away?" asked Katharine again. She spoke more to give herself time to recover than because she greatly wanted to hear the answer. What did the hour of Maidie's going matter, since she had not come home?



"CAN YOU TELL US WHITHER SHE WENT?"

"We have come," said Graham, in a low constrained voice, "to enquire for a—a pauper who is here under the name of Mary Gray. We should like to see her at once, if it is permissible."

"She is Number Fifteen, Block D," put in Katharine, as the man seemed to hesitate.

"Oh—ah—h'm," grunted the porter, pausing between his interjections to flutter over the leaves of a huge register. "We've got two Mary Grays in—as makes it a trifle confusing. Ah, I thought so—Number Fifteen, did you say, mum? Well, *that* Mary Gray's the one as took her discharge this morning."

"Let me see—'twasn't before nine, 'cos I was on dooty myself, and yet 'twas early, too. Must have been somewhere between nine and ten, mum. I rec'lects the young woman quite well, now you axes me about her—she were tall and 'aughty like, with uncommon dark eyes. 'Eld 'er 'ead 'igh, and wasn't afraid of no one—not she!" The porter grinned inquisitively, and looked at his interlocutors. He was beginning to think there was "somethinck in it."

"And can you tell us whither she went?" asked Katharine piteously.

The porter's fat sides heaved with laughter

but the gentleman's face looked very stern under the gas-lamp, and he judged it best to suppress his amusement as far as might be.

"Lor' bless you, mum," he cried, "wish I could tell you, if you want to know. But 'tain't our business to axe the paupers questions. They've got to obey orders and conform to discipline so long as they chooses to stay in 'ere; but onst they've got their discharges and set their foot over that there threshold, they're their own masters and mistresses till they choose to come back, and 'tain't *our* consarn where they go, whether to 'eaven or to —."

The porter had leant his arms comfortably upon the register, and was lolling over the desk, kicking one foot, in a carpet slipper, behind him. He looked with some curiosity and more condescension at the pair of pale faces looking in over his half-door, and smiled blandly, as if to say, "Are there any *more* questions as you'd like to ask me, sir and mum—for a small consideration?"

"Did she—Mary Gray—look distressed or in trouble when she was leaving?" asked Graham, speaking with a tremendous effort. It seemed a futile question to put, but it voiced a sickening anxiety. Such dreadful fears and doubts were thronging upon his mind. Maidie had been gone for eight or nine hours. What had she done with herself? What impulse had been uppermost when she left the workhouse?

"Distressed? Not a bit of it, sir," returned the porter in a reassuring tone. "She went off uncommon cheerful and jolly. Our folks mostly *do* go away pretty bright—'tis another tale when they come back, I can tell you—but your young woman were the merriest as I've seen this long while. 'Eld 'er 'ead 'igh, as I tell'd you, sir, and stepped out like a queen! 'Good-day to you, Mister Porter,' sez she, 'I'm going to my friends, and you won't see me darken *these* doors any more!' Thinks I to myself, 'You're uncommon sure of your welcome, my fine gal. By George, I hope you'll not be disappointed!'—I'm afeared, sir, she haven't turned up where she were expected?" added the narrator, with a sidelong look at the faces of his hearers.

To this enquiry Oliver made no reply, save to present the expected "tip," which was received in the usual manner and with many assurances that, if its receiver had any more "hinformation as they wanted, e'd be 'appy to supply it."

But what more was there to hear or to ask? Graham touched his wife on the arm, and they went out together into the quiet suburban road, where the gas-lamps shone on the long dead wall of the workhouse enclosure and not a soul was within sight. In absolute silence they took their way along it, and presently overtook the cab which had brought them from Chelsea.

"We may as well take it and go home again," said Oliver drearily. "There's nothing on earth to be done!"

"She will come yet, or we shall hear something from her," said Katharine, summoning courage at last to speak. "I won't think so badly of her as to believe she *could* disappear again without a word. She *does* believe, now, that we love her, and she knows how we have looked for her. I am sure she won't leave us quite in the dark. And I still think she will come."

Oliver shook his head. "I believe she has gone to—" he began; but there he broke off, and in the darkness his wife heard him mutter to himself, "May God forgive me and have mercy upon her!"

That drive back to Marmaduke Gardens was to Katharine for ever after like the recollection of an evil dream. She was so utterly tired out and so miserably disappointed; and the cab drove on, and on, through street after street, in what seemed a never-ending succession, while terrible images of Maidie's dead body, drifting down the river, floated before her mental vision. It seemed an eternity before her husband's voice said, "Here we are."

The door was opened almost before the cab stopped, for Susan was evidently on the watch for them. She had dinner all ready, and on a tray was something which she handed to her master with an important look.

"I don't know what this might be, sir," she said; "very likely it's only one of them nasty hand-bills; but I thought you'd better have it at once. It must have been put in the letter-box, sir, while I was downstairs for a minute, about six o'clock, for I've been in the hall pretty nearly all the time since you've been out, thinking as perhaps the—the lady might come while you were gone."

"That was very good of you, Susan," said Katharine gratefully. She was clinging to her husband's arm, almost too tired to move or speak; but the sight of that missive on the tray roused her again. It was an envelope of the very cheapest sort, fastened down, but with no name or address inscribed upon it.

"It is an advertisement," said Oliver, tossing it impatiently aside.

"It is a message from *her*," said Katharine with conviction. "Come into the study and let us see."

And a message from Maidie it was—a note written in a shaky handwriting, with a blunt lead pencil, on a crumpled bit of paper that had evidently seen other uses.

"My dear sister Katharine," the letter said, "I feel so mean for breaking my promise to you, as I am going to do; but *do* believe—do *try* and believe—that it is for your sake I am doing it. It is all for love of you. I can never, never tell you what you have done for me. The whole world seems changed to me since yesterday. If you had gone away and not spoken to me, as I thought, for one dreadful minute, you were going to do, it would have been the end of me. I should have gone and drowned myself, or—done worse. But now that you have kissed me, and called me by my

name, and made me feel I have a sister in you, it is all different. I almost think God must love me still, since He put it into your heart to love me—you, who must have every reason to think the very worst of me. But it is just because I love you, and am so grateful to you, that I am going to show that I can make a sacrifice too. I do believe, to the bottom of my heart, that you really meant it—that I might, if I chose, come home to-day to you and Oliver, and find a welcome from you *both*. If what you say is true, Oliver forgives me—may God bless him for it! But I'm not coming, sister Katharine. I know what it would be for you, *really*, to have such an impossible person in your house. It wouldn't be fair on you. I should make you both miserable; and then what *should* I do? No; I've thought it over carefully, and I'm quite certain it is for the best. If you never hear of me again, Oliver and Katharine, you are not to take it to heart—do you hear? You have done your very best for me—more, far more, than I deserve—and you are not to let me spoil your lives, or make them one bit less happy than they deserve to be. If you think of me at all, you are to believe that I am 'happy and good,' as the children say. But what I *hope* is that you will soon forget that such a plague, to herself and everybody else, and such an utter failure as Marjory Graham ever existed. Good-bye, dear souls, good-bye. God bless you both!"

"There, that is the end—I told you so," said Oliver Graham, looking up from the letter with haggard eyes. "That is the end of my sister Maidie."

"No," retorted his wife, "not the end. Please God, it is the beginning."

CHAPTER XXVIII.—AT LAST.

THREE years have passed for Katharine and Oliver Graham before we see them again—three

"Kind

Calm years, exacting their account
Of pain,"

it is true, but full, too, of a deeper happiness than they had known in the earlier days of their married life. Happiness had come back to them, with a soberer face indeed, but with a greater power to bless and a deeper certainty of abiding. There was less going out for them than of yore, and many pleasant invitations were refused; for Graham gave two evenings a week to a men's club in the poorest part of Battersea, and his wife had many claims of a similar kind upon her time. People said there was "no seeing anything of Mrs. Graham nowadays; she was for ever running after some good work or other." And though this statement, like others made in the same spirit, was by no means wholly true, and Katharine was a great deal in her own house

and more accessible than ever to her real friends, still there was no denying that her aims were different, and that the main current of her life had shifted its channel.

The commercial crisis which, at the time of Maidie's last appearance on the horizon of her family circle, had so seriously threatened Graham's affairs, passed off without an actual catastrophe and the City sky gradually cleared again. But the firm in which he was a partner had had a serious shake, and the vision of becoming, within the near future, a rich man faded into the dim distance. There was no pressure of poverty within the Grahams' home; they had enough and a little to spare; but they knew now that they were never likely to be wealthy people, and with this knowledge various pleasant fancies and dreams of social distinction faded away.

Within the last few months, however, a great new tide of happiness, of a different kind, had flooded the hearts of this young couple and made them feel rich and blessed once more. Katharine again had a baby in her arms—a sturdy, dark-eyed boy, who, even in his infant helplessness, showed a spirit and a determination to do as he liked which reminded Oliver oddly of his own father and sister. Katharine and he looked at each other and smiled when little Barty kicked and roared in his cradle for something that it was not good for him to have, and struck his baby fists against the sides of his bed in impotent wrath; but his masterful temper sometimes made Katharine look anxious.

"Oh, Oliver," she whispered, after one of these outbursts, "just fancy if this little thing had a temper like poor Maidie's!"

"Don't be unhappy, my dear," Oliver answered; "please God, our young man shall have a better chance than his aunt had of learning how to govern himself. We will try and make our baby's childhood all that Maidie's was not. When I think of the roughness and discomfort of our young days, I can never wonder that she, poor soul, was so untuned to home life and quiet ways."

Oliver sighed heavily, and a brooding wistful look stole into his face—that look which told his wife that he was thinking of his lost sister.

"If only I knew what had become of her," was his thought, constantly present though seldom uttered. "I would give a year of my life to know that she is safe and at peace, either in this world or—beyond it."

The arrival of that unhappy little note had decided Graham to lose no more time, but to have a regular search started for the missing girl. Advertisements begging "Mary Gray, otherwise Marjory Graham" to communicate with her anxious relatives were inserted in all such papers as might possibly catch her eye, and the work of tracing her was even put into the hands of the police. But it was of no avail. Maidie had disappeared as completely as she had done on the previous occasion, and far more thorough and systematic efforts to find

her were entirely fruitless. She had plunged back again into the whirlpool of the great city, and its waves had swallowed her up. How she was supporting herself nobody could discover. Whether, even, she were dead or alive was a matter of absolute uncertainty.

The difficult task of trying to trace her was made more difficult still by circumstances which seemed to conspire together to baffle the seekers in their attempts. There was one likely source of information—Maidie's faithful lover, John Hepburn. To him Graham instantly turned, writing a long and full letter to him at his Yorkshire home, telling all the circumstances of Katharine's discovery of Maidie in the North London Workhouse, of the preparations they had made to receive her, and of the intense disappointment which had befallen them. "I feel I have no sort of right to appeal to you to help us," were the concluding words of the letter; "you have held by poor Maidie when I neglected her; you have done your very utmost, all along, to succour and befriend her, while I have done as little as I could. My wife (who is with me in every word I write) feels that we are both utterly to blame for treating the request you made, when you came to see us, as we did. But we are now at least doing our best to atone for past unkindness; and on that score I know I shall not appeal to you in vain to help us to find Marjory."

That letter, to its writer's sad dismay, was returned to him a few days later from the Cheesethorpe Post-office, with "Gone away; address not known," scrawled across it. And about the same time Graham learnt that Pether Grange had been sold only the week previously, and its owner, John Hepburn, had left the neighbourhood and gone no one knew whither. His mother had died a few months before, and, from Graham's enquiries, it appeared that her son had thereupon broken all the ties that bound him to the land which had belonged to his family for two hundred years, and had gone his way, like a pilgrim, out into the wide world.

Slowly but surely the expectation of seeing Maidie in their home, or of receiving news of her, had faded away, and Oliver and Katharine had settled down to their usual ways once more. Their usual ways—only with a difference. That visit to the workhouse and the interview with Maidie became like a weird dream to them—a thing standing isolated in the memory, as vivid dreams do stand there, with nothing to lead up to them, and no connection with the events that follow. But the image of Maidie was cherished and kept green in the hearts of her brother and sister; they spoke of her often and held her in gentle and forgiving remembrance, forgetting her faults and follies and recalling only that she was their sister, bound to them for ever by the indissoluble tie of kinship. And Katharine still maintained, "We shall see her again."

Three years, I said, have passed, and we see Katharine and Oliver once more. It was a

winter evening, cold and frosty. The little drawing-room at 12 Marmaduke Gardens had its curtains drawn and its fire blazing cheerfully; it was warm, cosy, and peaceful. Katharine was awaiting her husband's return, with her baby in her arms. He had fallen asleep, with his rosy face cuddled against her neck; and his mother, tired with a long afternoon's work in her district, had followed his example, resting her cheek softly upon his head.

She was awakened suddenly by the tramp of feet on the stairs and the opening of the door, and started up, blinking and confused, with little Barty in her arms. There was a pretty soft flush on the cheek which had been pillow'd on his curls. Her husband was entering the room, and he was not alone. Someone was following close behind him—a tall, very tall man, carrying a bundle of shawls in his arms.

Oliver crossed the room to where his wife was standing. "Katharine, do you know who this is?" he asked in a strange eager voice.

"Mr. Hepburn," Katharine answered, without a moment's hesitation. History was repeating itself. Had he not stood in that very same spot, once before, with the glow of the firelight on his rugged face?

"You must say John Hepburn, wife—our brother-in-law, John Hepburn," returned Oliver, with an agitated laugh.

Katharine looked from one to the other. "Then," she said slowly, the colour coming and going in her face, "she is alive, our sister Marjory—your wife?—Oh, go and bring her in, John Hepburn. Bring her in and let us show her how welcome she is! How could you leave her standing outside?" And Katharine started eagerly forward, her face all lighted up with love and pity, and the hand that was not holding her babe stretched out in a gesture of loving welcome.

"God bless you for a good woman!" muttered Hepburn under his breath. There were tears shining like stars in his vivid grey eyes. He looked at her with a long melancholy gaze, and slightly shook his head.

Katharine's face paled, and the light of welcome died away on it. "What do you mean? Where's poor Maidie? Do pray tell me," she cried imploringly.

Her husband came forward and laid his hand on her arm. "My dear," he said, "Maidie has come back to us—as you always said she would—only not as we fancied she would come. Her troubles are all over; she is at rest. She died three months ago, in Australia, of consumption. Her husband has come home to tell us all about her."

"Oh, but she's *dead*," wailed Katharine, with a burst of tears. "We can never tell her how we forgave her, and loved her, and looked for her to come home."

"Mrs. Graham," said the deep, grave voice of John Hepburn, speaking with a suddenness that made Katharine start, "if there was one thing my wife clung to, in the weeks and

months that she was dying, it was to the assurance that she was loved and forgiven at home. She was as sure of it as she was, before the end, of that other Forgiveness which is the only one that *really* matters for us all. She learnt to believe in the great Forgiveness and Love from what your gentleness and mercy taught her. And if she died at peace and almost happy, it was thanks to you. 'Tell Katharine I believe in her love and compassion as I do in my Saviour's,' she said; 'and tell her I am



HIS EYES WERE STUDYING THE LITTLE SLEEPING FACE.

sending her the strongest proof of it that one woman *can* give to another.'

Hepburn paused and looked at Katharine intently. Her head was bent and the tears were dropping down her cheeks like rain. His face grew ashy pale, and his lips quivered as if in strong pain. "I've done as she bade me—I could not do otherwise. But it is like cutting off my right hand," he muttered. His voice was hoarse and broken, full of unspoken grief. "Here is the proof she sent you—will you take it?"

With a gentleness of touch strange to see in one so big and stalwart, he shifted the bundle

in his arms and threw back a corner of the shawl which covered it. "Look," he said—"look, Katharine, at your nephew."

There, under the shawl, with his head pillowled against the man's broad shoulder, lay a little child, fast asleep. Its cheek was nestled as comfortably against the rough frieze coat as if on its own white pillow; one rounded arm was half tucked inside the breast of the coat, and the soft fingers could be seen clinging to its collar. It lay as soft and fair and warm there, in the strong arms, and as quietly asleep as if on its mother's bosom.

"Oh—" cried Katharine—a long-drawn, soft breath of love and admiration, right out of a mother's heart. She laid her own baby quickly on the couch, and held out her arms to take Marjory's child.

Hepburn did not seem to notice the gesture. He was absorbed in the fair creature in his arms. He stood touching its cheek and curly head and soft round arm with his huge fingers, with extraordinary gentleness. His eyes were studying the little sleeping face with the hungry, yearning look of one who would fain print on his memory a picture that should last his life. "My little son," he muttered to himself—"Maidie's little child! I shall never see you like this again." And once more his great hand caressed the sleeper's face; he brushed the curls back from the lovely forehead, and studied the long black fringe of lashes lying on the rosy cheek. Graham and his wife looked on, with sympathy too deep for speech.

Suddenly Hepburn seemed to wake to the consciousness that he was being watched. He reddened, and his brow contracted. With an effort he pulled himself together, raised the drowsy head off his shoulders with such delicate handling that the slumber was scarcely even for a moment disturbed, and laid the warm, soft, gently-breathing creature in Katharine's arms.

"He's tired out," said the father, in the same quivering, broken voice. "We have travelled straight through from Brindisi, and the little chap has been so good all the time. But he is only two years old. If you please you can undress him without his rousing up at all. He won't miss me, so."

"Shall I take him and put him to bed?" asked Katharine gently.

Hepburn nodded. He could not trust himself to say any more, or to kiss his sleeping child; but his eyes followed the curly head, as he could see it being borne away on Katharine's shoulder, with a look that made Graham's heart ache.

When Katharine returned, she and her husband and John Hepburn sat long together, hearing the story of Maidie's life since they had lost sight of her again. It was Hepburn who had found her, late on the evening of the day on which she left the workhouse, wandering aimlessly from street to street. Her one hope was that merciful death might soon release her; her one fixed determination that

Oliver and his wife should never hear of her again. To that determination she had clung steadily to the very end, in spite of every persuasion that Hepburn could use. He, released from home ties by his mother's death, had given up everything for the purpose of finding Maidie. For a fortnight he had been seeking for her, up and down the London streets, and found her at last, spent and exhausted, her fiery spirit quenched, thankful to lay her bruised and battered heart to rest upon his tireless, invincible love.

They were married, and Hepburn took his wife to Australia. There, very soon after little Oliver's birth, consumption declared itself, and, after a lingering illness of two years, Marjory died, so peaceful and so weary that it was impossible to wish her a different fate.

"It was only a few days before she died," said Hepburn, in his deep low voice, deepened by intense feeling, "that I once more begged her to give me leave to send you news of her. I've gone over her answer in my mind till I know it by heart. She had grown so weak that she could scarcely move; but as she spoke she lifted her head from the pillow, and that proud look came into her eyes again, and she was the old Maidie of our boyish days—the spoilt child of the Wyke. 'No,' she said, 'don't ask me, John. I made a solemn vow I'd trouble them no more, and I'll not change my mind now at the last. It is the only unselfish thing I ever did, and I'll keep it up to the end. But when I am dead, John, you must go home and see Oliver and his sweet wife, and tell them their love and their welcome are warm at my heart as I lie here dying. And take little Oliver to Katharine, John, and ask her to bring him up, for my sake, to be a good man, one who—'" Hepburn paused and drew a long, slow breath—a breath from a brave heart staggering under a load of grief that almost crushed it, "'—who will be a greater comfort to his father than his mother has ever been,' was what she said," he ended, scarcely above his breath. "But she was all the world to me," he added, speaking up suddenly, in a strange, loud, defiant voice, as if uttering a testimony before an unfriendly tribunal.

"I'm going back to Australia as soon as I have seen the boy settled," he added, after a pause which neither of his hearers ventured to

break. He rose, and stood looking about him like a man just awakened from a deep sleep. "I've got to pull my life together again somehow, and I think I shall do it best out there. And her grave keeps calling me—drawing me like a magnet."

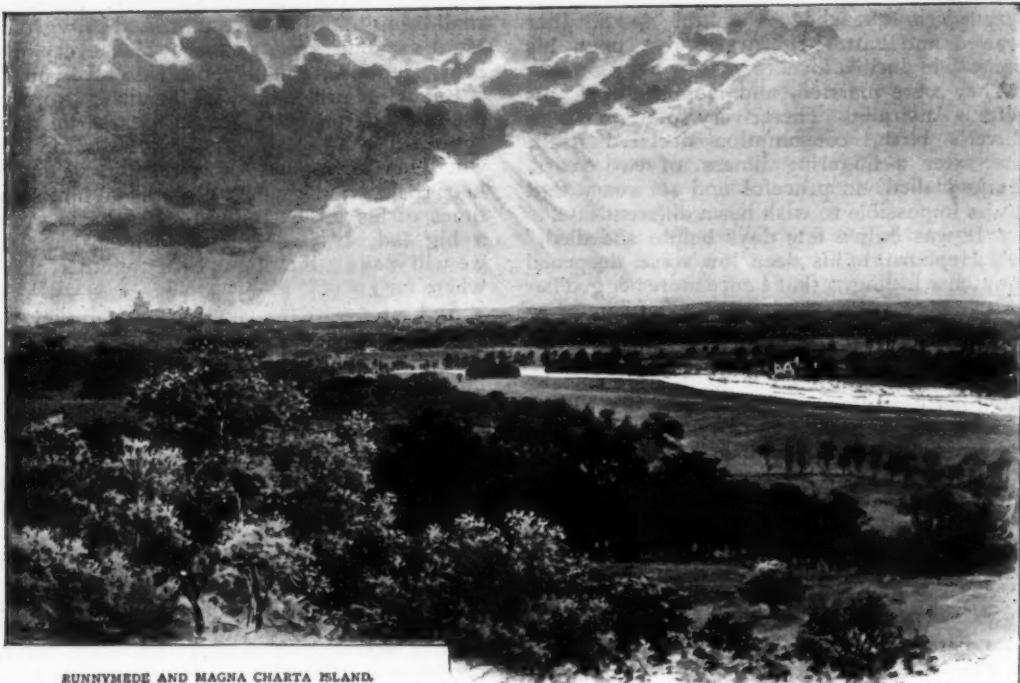
"Think better of it," urged Oliver, "and stay with us. We will find you work, and you will not be separated from your boy. Katharine shall bring him up, since that is your wish and Maidie's, but you can see him every day. Stay, Hepburn, among those who love you."

But Hepburn shook his head. "No, it is useless," he said; "I could not settle down again. I would rather be in the same land where her worn-out body is resting. You will keep the boy; and you will speak to him sometimes of his mother. And when he is grown a big lad, I shall come and fetch him, and we will make a life of our own together, somewhere far away."

And so he went his way, and all that was left to witness of Marjory Graham's existence was a little curly-headed lad, with her great black eyes, but a character deep and strong and gentle like his father's; and a life "spoilt," in the eyes of the world, being lived out, lonely and apart, under the southern sun. For what harvest is there to be reaped from characters like hers? What record of good deeds can be found to keep in remembrance such aimless lives? Mere driftwood they seem; wreckage carried hither and thither upon the tide of Time, and cast up finally, "out of remembrance," upon some forgotten shore.

So it seems with them; but when we are considering the final issue of such lives we have to remember—is it for us to judge? Can we weigh them fairly in the balances and know all their difficulties, all their secret struggles? "To his own Master he standeth or falleth." We shall do wisest to leave them to Him. But for us others, less tempted and with easier natures, lives and characters like these should have a special significance. They offer the crowning effort and opportunity for self-sacrifice to those around them. And those who win from God the patience and insight and heavenly charity to bear with and influence and succour one such belong to the inner circle of His servants; they shall know—if not now, then hereafter—something of the secret of the Redeemer's joy.

MRS. OLIPHANT AND "MAGA" ON THE THAMES.



RUNNEMEDE AND MAGNA CHARTA ISLAND.

The article now reproduced was written in the autumn of the year 1877—nearly twenty-one years ago. It is twenty-one years since the party commemorated took place, and one year since Mrs. Oliphant went to rest. The paper, after it was written, was laid aside—was gradually pushed into the recesses of a writing table—and forgotten. Brought to light again by accident, it seemed an almost pathetic record of times and people long passed away. The bright and charming hostess of that summer day's entertainment had to go down into the very shadow of death, into days of bitterest grief and loneliness, before, a childless and heart-broken woman, though always brave and loving, she died June 25, 1897.

Her husband and children had also preceded her. The friends spoken of in this paper were mostly gone, as well as many not mentioned—Principal and Mrs. Tulloch of St. Andrews, Mrs. Macpherson the adopted child, illustrator and biographer of Mrs. Jameson and others. Mr. John Blackwood died many years ago, and his death was a great personal grief to Mrs. Oliphant; but, curiously enough, her last work, and the one which death interrupted, was the history of the great publishing house of which he was long chief.

I WHO have spent many never-to-be-forgotten summer days upon the Thames, and woven webs of pleasant associations about every mile of its course from Oxford to Kingston, am apt to believe that there is no lovelier river in the world than that which Spenser loved and sung, and which still is "the gentle stream" whose banks are

"Painted all with variable flowers,
And all the meads adorned with dainty gems,
Fit to deck maidens' bowers."

I am ready to allow that the Rhine can beat

us in ruined castles, and the Elbe in gigantic rocks; I acknowledge that the Danube is a great deal bigger than our beloved river, and that the Mississippi, the St. Lawrence, and a few others share that advantage; but, all this being granted, I still believe with all my heart that there is no place in the world where it is possible to enjoy the luxury of smooth and silent flight, borne onwards with flash of swiftly dipping oars, so well as in the long reach below Henley, or past the ill-famed walls of Medmenham; that nowhere else can one dream away the sunny afternoon hours in more undisturbed

content than under the grand shadows of Bysham Woods, or among the water-lilies at the foot of stately Clivedon.

Three or four miles from Windsor, and near the quaint country town of Egham, there is one bit of the river and river-bank about which shadows of a very distant past gather so constantly and so definitely that I scarcely ever row



THE LATE MRS. OLIPHANT.
(From a photograph by H. S. Mendelsohn.)

past it without finding that the place is peopled by the phantom actors in its great drama. A small green island rises, set round with forget-me-nots, out of the calm and shining waters. Under a wide-spreading walnut tree near its centre stands a splendid pavilion, and the royal standard of England unfurls its white and golden blazonry against the dark foliage. In the pleasant shade a sullen, handsome king sits and looks scowlingly at the fair scene before him. Opposite to him, and divided from him by almost the whole body of the stream, stretches a broad and level meadow, backed by a broken and wooded range of hills; and all the smooth green space is crowded with the chivalry of his kingdom. The sunshine flashes back from polished armour, and sets off the gay colours of many a banner and pennon; everywhere may be seen stately barons and long-robed churchmen; the pageantry of a battlefield mingles with that of a court. This is the vision which still haunts the green slope of Magna Charta Island, and throws its glamour over Runnymede, "the meadow of council."

But there was one day in the summer now ending, on which the shadows of the thirteenth century were fairly driven from Magna Charta Island by the realities of the nineteenth, and the whole scene was peopled by men and women who, if the pen may really rival the sword, are scarcely less important in our days than the signatories of the Great Charter were in theirs. And since I had the good fortune to be admitted to the later gathering, I should be ungrateful if I did not allow it to be at least as

interesting to those concerned as was the earlier one.

The writers who can claim the highest rank in fiction are very few. Still fewer are those who, belonging to the first rank of novelists, are also distinguished in more serious literary work. One woman there is, however, who for more than twenty-five years has gone on steadily producing work always valuable, and generally of the best kind in biography and criticism, side by side with a long succession of novels such as have won her friends and admirers by thousands on both sides of the Atlantic. She was but a girl when men like Jeffrey recognised the touch of genius in her portrait of "Mistress Margaret Maitland," and if she had never written any other book but that first one and the "Chronicles of Carlingford" she would still have been known nearly as widely as the English language itself. It was this lady (needless to name her since I have named her work) who had the pleasant thought of gathering a group of friends about her to celebrate the twenty-fifth year of her contributing to "Blackwood" by spending a day at Magna Charta Island.

The morning of the 19th of June sees a great stir going on under the shadow of the historic walnut tree—which, however, local tradition does not assert to be the very same which sheltered King John, but only its direct descendant. Long before the coming of the guests a large tent has been prepared to serve as a dining-room, where there is arranged a long table charmingly decorated with flowers and covered with good things to be eaten at four o'clock.

No one must suppose that the island has remained unchanged since 1215. It is private property now, and has upon it a charming little house of grey stone, whose walls and many gables are clothed to their very top with climbing roses, Virginia creeper, and clematis, and whose hall enshrines a stone said to be the one on which Magna Charta was signed. The ground between the house and the river is slightly terraced, and forms the smoothest and greenest of lawns, bordered and embellished with flower-beds and ornamental shrubs, and not without that most beautiful of riverside trees, the willow. Happily for us, this beautiful little nest belongs to a gentleman who spends much of the summer salmon-fishing in Scotch or Welsh streams, and who generously gives the occasional use of it to such of his friends as he can trust. By his permission our hostess becomes for the day mistress alike of the house and of the island.

Two o'clock has struck, and the lawn is becoming populous. Parties arrive driving or on foot from the neighbouring railway station of Wyrardisbury, often written Wraysbury; boats drop silently down the stream and land their occupants on the sloping lawn; figures appear mysteriously on the green margin of Runnymede and beckon to the amateur ferryman to come and row them across; a smart

"four," in the correctest of boating costumes, draw up in workmanlike style to the landing, not quite unconscious of admiring glances from under pink and blue parasols. By half-past two everybody has arrived, and the few outsiders, knowing that they are in a very menagerie of literary lions, are busy asking "Who is this?" "Who is that?" of their better informed acquaintance.

The guest *par excellence* of the day is among the first to arrive, and it is round him and the hostess that interest naturally centres. He is a man apparently a little past middle age, with a keen, humorous face, grey hair and whiskers, and clear blue eyes. His general aspect is much more that of a country squire than of a man devoted to literary labours. You would imagine the hunting-whip more familiar to his fingers than the pen, and he himself a better authority on the prospects of grouse than on the merits of a new book. But in so doing you would guess wrongly, for the man who stands on the lawn at Magna Charta Island, leaning a little heavily on his stick, and talking with a strong Scotch accent to those about him, is John Blackwood, the "prince of editors," the man whose name is indissolubly connected with that of "Maga," the discoverer of George Eliot, the godfather of "The Battle of Dorking," and the oldest surviving literary ally of the author of "Margaret Maitland."

It is not an uncommon thing in England for a publisher to be a mere tradesman, but the Blackwoods, father and sons, have never belonged to this class. Round the father, William Blackwood, a cluster of brilliant men and women gathered early in the century, and there is scarcely a name among all those which gave Edinburgh a right to be called the Modern Athens which the Blackwoods do not claim as that of a family friend. The present generation, now growing elderly, remembers the everyday doings and sayings of those sons and daughters of genius, and will tell stories now and then that bring up before us Christopher North, De Quincy, the Ettrick Shepherd, Aytoun, Miss Ferrier, and a throng of others, in their habits as they lived. One story comes back strongly into my mind as I stand aside looking at the present editor of "Maga." Professor Wilson (Christopher North) was, like so many men of extraordinary literary power, very apt to defer work to the very last minute, sometimes beyond the last minute; and this, in the days when he was nominal editor, and a really very important contributor to the Magazine, was the cause of great and repeated exasperation to Mr. Blackwood and all his staff. On one occasion the moment of completing the month's number was close at hand, and nothing had been heard of the Professor or his manuscript. In vain did Mr. Blackwood write, urging despatch; Christopher had put on his shooting jacket, and was far too deeply interested in sport to pay any heed to business. Despair suggested a means of vengeance. A long and elaborate article

was prepared, which began by describing the anxiety felt by those connected with the management of the Magazine on account of the editor's disappearance, and by his complete failure to answer the letters addressed to him at the place where he was supposed to be shooting. At last, the narrative went on, his silence had been but too well accounted for by the sad intelligence that Christopher North had ceased to exist. Full details of the accident by which the lamented editor had met his fate followed, and the whole wound up with a critical notice of his life and labours in the usual style of newspaper obituaries. This article Mr. Blackwood found means to have inserted in two or three copies of the leading Edinburgh paper, specially printed for the purpose, with black lines, etc.; and one of the copies so prepared was sent to Professor Wilson in place of the ordinary journal. What his sentiments were on receiving it he never clearly explained, but my informant, who had some reason to know, said, "From that time forth he took good care to be punctual in sending in his work for the Magazine."

Two tall and soldier-like looking men, both singularly handsome, tower over a group of ladies at a little distance. These are General William and Colonel Edward Hamley, two brothers who can either fight or write, as occasion serves. The elder and less known, though he has written two or three novels, is most successful on military topics; he is busy at present with a set of papers on "The Storm in the East," which, as I am told (for I am no judge of such matters), show much ability and knowledge of the subject.

Colonel Hamley, on the other hand, is often tempted away from sterner labours by the Delilah of fiction. One of the most romantic of modern novels is his "Lady Lee's Widowhood," wherein the beautiful heiress marries a private soldier, who, of course, turns out to be an heroic personage in disguise; nevertheless, I believe the Colonel would be the last man to permit a lady of his family to commit a similar imprudence. He is supposed to reign with a certain rigour over his little kingdom at Sandhurst, and to be solacing his leisure at present with the study of Voltaire, about whom he is to discourse to the world in the series of foreign classics forthcoming under the editorship of Mrs. Oliphant.

A very tall and rather stout lady comes slowly across the grass, walking with a contemplative air, and attended by a gentleman a little shorter than herself, and slightly lame. These are Mr. and Mrs. Craik—he a partner in Macmillan's great publishing firm, she (*née* Dinah Muloch) the author of "John Halifax," and one of the best known of English female writers. She wears a plain black silk dress, a white crape shawl, and a straw bonnet, shaped like a Mary Stuart cap, and trimmed with white. Her thick braids of hair are almost as snowy as the feather in her bonnet. But there is a serene sweetness about

her face which is very attractive, and suits well with the somewhat quaint and Quaker-like dress. She has gentle-looking blue eyes and a soft voice—altogether she is in appearance and manner just what her books would lead us to suppose.

Talking of romantic externals, what can be less romantic than that tall and stout figure in a loose overcoat and somewhat broad-brimmed hat, standing by the water-side, and looking exactly what he is—a cultivator of the soil? Not a farmer, indeed, but a "grower"—in other words a nursery gardener—and yet the truest poet, the greatest master of humour and of pathos in the whole of this brilliant gathering. That is the man who wove such delicate webs of fancy about the history of brave, honest Jan Ridd; that is the humourist who has given us the wisdom Cripps the Carrier learned in long association with a nobler though quadrupedal nature. Mr. Blackmore is often fair prey for the critics, but oh, how few of them are able to climb to within a thousand miles of his empire over his readers! Perhaps he gathers inspiration from the flowers he loves, and of which he has just offered such a magnificent nosegay to his hostess.

Look at that little man moving briskly from acquaintance to acquaintance, with a keen but pleasant face, and with energy and capability expressed in every feature and every gesture. You could not for a moment doubt that he was a soldier, neither could you for a moment confound him with a mere "fighting animal." That is Colonel Chesney, the creator and present head of the great Engineering College for India, whose roofs are visible over there on the highest summit of Cooper's Hill, but better known to the world in general as the author of "The Battle of Dorking." I have heard that the number of "Blackwood's Magazine" which contained that famous paper was reprinted over and over until it reached 70,000 copies—of course exclusive of the American reprint—and it must be remembered that "Blackwood" keeps up its old price of half a crown a number. Since then Colonel Chesney (who is at the same time the most strict and vigilant of autocrats in his college) has written one or two novels. "The Dilemma," published last year in "Blackwood," is the outgrowth of his long and intimate knowledge of life and affairs in India; but I do not think he prides himself particularly on his literary successes. He seems to me to be one of those men to whom "Duty" is the watch-word of life, and who find it natural just to do the day's work as it comes in the best way possible, and to think no more of it after it is done.

Here is yet one more soldier novelist. Is there some natural affinity between war and fiction, so that when our gallant defenders cannot get the one they must needs go in for the other? That handsome man, who seems chiefly bent on making himself agreeable to the younger ladies is Major Lockhart, who has written some rather clever stories, "Double or Quits," "Fair to See," etc.

There are two people standing side by side on the soft grass by the river, and deep in talk, though any on-looker can be sure that the one is deaf and the other making herself heard with a little difficulty. She is a pretty young matron who, being much allied to literary people, has herself been tempted to dabble in literature. He is the Mr. Kinglake who in his youth produced the gem of travel books, and in his age has put lance in rest so fiercely against the last Napoleon. To-day he much more suggests the writer of *Eothen* than the historian of the Crimean War. With his ultra-refined aspect, his snowy hair and worn face, his thin figure, and the aspect of anxiety which seems inseparable from deafness, it is really difficult to understand how he ever roused himself to vehement denunciation. But if I were near enough to hear what he is saying now to an agreeable companion, I can guess that there might be some delightful anecdote from the stores of his memory to be picked up, and that it would be told with a grace that few younger men can match. More than once, I think, he has furnished Mrs. Oliphant with scraps of reminiscence which have served her as skeletons on which to build up stories.

Is it not too long a task to speak of all the interesting people gathered here? Talking vivaciously, laughing jovially, Anthony Trollope makes his way among his friends and reminds me of an evening when, talk having fallen on the number of books respectively produced by himself and Mrs. Oliphant, he claimed a certain number—I forget exactly what, but something like thirty-five. On this the younger people fell to counting up Mrs. Oliphant's (a thing she was equally unable and unwilling to do herself)—until they reached forty, when Mr. Trollope, laughing, owned himself beaten. They are both still vigorous, both still hard at work—which will count most productions at the end of the day?

Yes, I begin to feel that I have looked at enough lions, and turn a listless, if not a deaf, ear to somebody who tells me, "That is Mr. Henry Reeve, a mighty potentate, who talks of 'my contributors' as he might say 'my gardeners.'" "That is Mr. Hutton, of the 'Spectator.'" I am growing indifferent and inclined to solace myself by contemplating the frivolous prettiness of the group of young ladies who are perched on the edge of a grassy terrace.

But now there is a general stir. Our hostess has taken Mr. Blackwood's arm, and is marshalling her guests to the tent. If the old slanders about the untidiness and unsightliness of literary women still survive, they ought to die out to-day. Where, I should like to know, is there a better-dressed woman, or one more generally agreeable to look at, than the one before us? She wears a dress of plain rich black silk, with a fichu of the most delicate lace; a black lace bonnet, just touched with the palest primrose colour, sets off her prematurely white hair, her fine complexion, and the rare

beauty of her clear brown eyes. As becomes the owner of a finely shaped hand, she is *bien gantée*, and I see that her two sons—most merciless of critics—cannot help but regard her with that satisfied air with which fathers, husbands, brothers, and other male relatives of the wearer reward a perfectly satisfactory toilette. We gradually gather round the long table, and the clatter of plates supersedes the chatter of tongues. Not that talk ceases—on the contrary, it grows brisker by favour of the species of *tête-à-tête* in which each couple may, if they please, indulge. By-and-by, however, we reach the stage at which huge bowls of strawberries begin to be carried round the table in company with mountains of ice cream, and the guests to occupy themselves with that mixture of the two, dear to Etonians under the name of Strawberry Mess. And now arrives the moment when, if ever, speeches must be made.

The first speaker rises, and as he does so everybody stops talking and turns to look at him. He is a very young man, almost a boy, only the other day an Eton boy, and now an undergraduate at Balliol. It is his duty, as our hostess's eldest son and representative, to propose the health of the guest of the day, and he does it with a grace which is rather remarkable in a speaker of his, usually awkward, age. But the Eton Literary Society, commonly known as "Pop," and the Oxford "Union" are not bad schools in which to get a little training for Parliament or the Bar. He speaks modestly and to the purpose, alluding to the long friendship between his mother and Mr. Blackwood, and ending with a little story. "To show," he says, "in what allegiance to Maga my mother brought up her family, I may tell an incident in my own history which, I have heard, happened when I was about five years old. I was talking to some good-natured visitor about a story I had read. 'Where did you find that?' he

asked. 'In the Magazine,' was the answer. 'But what Magazine?' I looked at him with amazement, and said, 'Why, *THE Magazine*, of course—BLACKWOOD!'"

In the midst of a little laughter he proposes "Mr. Blackwood's health," and sits down, and after it has been drunk heartily, Mr. Blackwood begins his reply. He is not a good speaker, but very stammering and uncertain in his utterance; on this occasion, however, he has much that is pleasant to say, and says it well. He alludes, naturally enough, to the place of the assembly, draws a humorous parallel between King John and himself, the Barons of Magna Charta and his "bold Barons of Blackwood"; and then in a more serious tone passes on to relate the commencement of his acquaintance with our hostess. He describes the young woman new to literature, and shy, but with the same bright eyes full of intelligence as to-day. "She talked to me," he says, "among other things, about Thackeray and Dickens, and I thought I had never heard anything better said. I asked her to write it down, and she did so; and that was the beginning of her work for the Magazine."

And with the cordial cheers which greet this second toast, the party breaks up. Again groups scatter themselves about the island. Some get into the boats and row off up or down the river, now gorgeous in sunset tints; some sit on the grass; some wander away out of sight and enjoy the sweets of a little flirtation. An hour passes quickly, and the time comes to separate.

There must be a touch of sadness in all parting, as there is in the beauty of evening. The day is over, those who have met may never meet again; still, a pleasure once enjoyed never perishes entirely, and our day at Magna Charta will always be, for many of us, one of the most delightful of memories.—c.



MAGNA CHARTA ISLAND.

THE CENSUS OF THE SKY.

BY E. WALTER MAUNDER, F.R.A.S.

THE determination of time, and the observation of the changes of the weather, are duties the importance of which readily commends itself to the general public. It is easy to see that in any civilized country it is very necessary to have an accurate standard of time. Our railways and telegraphs make it quite impossible for us to be content with the rough-and-ready sun-dial which satisfied our forefathers; whilst the desirability of keeping so constant a watch on meteorological changes as to be able to forecast the weather for some little time ahead will appeal to everybody. But it should be remembered that it was neither to establish a "longitude nought," and so create a system of standard time, nor to keep a watch on "storm and sun" that Greenwich Observatory was founded in 1675. It was for "The Rectifying the Tables of the Motions of the Heavens and the Places of the Fixed Stars in order to find out the so much desired Longitude at Sea for the perfecting the Art of Navigation."

It may be asked why, if this were the purpose of the Observatory at its foundation, two and a quarter centuries ago; if, as was the case, the work was set on foot from the beginning and was carried out with every possible care, how comes it that it is still the fundamental work of the Observatory and, instead of being completed, has assumed greater proportions at the present day than ever before?

The answer to this enquiry may be found in a special application of the old proverb, originally directed against the discontent of man: "The more he has, the more he wants." For, however paradoxical it may seem, it is true that the fuller a star catalogue is, and the more accurate the places of the stars that it contains, the greater is the need for a yet fuller catalogue with places more accurate still.

It is worth while following up this paradox at some detail, as it affords a very instructive example of the way in which a work started on purely utilitarian grounds extends itself till it crosses the undefined boundary and enters the region of pure science.

THE FIRST CENSUS-TAKING.

We have no idea who made the earliest census of the sky. It is written for us in no book; it is not even engraved on any monument. And yet no small portion of it is in our hands to-day, and, strangest of all, we are able to fix fairly closely the time at which it was made, and the latitude in which its compiler lived. The catalogue is very unlike our star catalogues of to-

day. The places of the stars are very roughly indicated, and yet this catalogue has left a more enduring mark than all those that have succeeded it. The catalogue simply consists of the star names.

An old lady who had attended a University Extension lecture on astronomy was heard to exclaim: "What wonderful men these astronomers are! I can understand how they can find out how far off the stars are, how big they are, and what they weigh—that is all easy enough; and I think I can see how they find out what they are made of. But there is one thing that I can't understand—I don't know how they can find out what are their names!" This same difficulty, though with a much deeper meaning than the old lady in her simplicity was able to grasp, has occurred to many students of astronomy. Many have wished to know what was the meaning of, and whence were derived, the sonorous names which are found attached to all the brighter stars on our celestial globes: Adhara, Alderamin, Betelgeuse, Denebola, Schedar, Zubeneschamal, and many more. The explanation lies here. Some 5,000 years ago, a man, or college of men, living in latitude 40° North, in order that they might better remember the stars, associated certain groups of them with certain fancied figures, and the individual star names are simply Arabic words designed to indicate whereabouts in its peculiar figure or constellation that special star was situated. Thus Adhara means "back," and is the name of the bright star in the back of the great Dog. Alderamin means "right arm," and is the brightest star in the right arm of Cepheus, the king. Betelgeuse is "giant's shoulder," the giant being Orion; Denebola is "lion's tail." Schedar is the star on the "breast" of Cassiopeia, and Zubeneschamal is "northern claw," that is, of the Scorpion. So far is clear enough. The names of the stars for the most part explain themselves; but whence the constellations derived their names, how it was that so many snakes and fishes and centaurs were pictured out in the sky, is a much more difficult problem, and one which does not concern us here.

THE NORTHERN STAR NOT CONSTANT.

One point, however, these old constellations do tell us, and tell us plainly. They show that the axis of the earth, which, as the earth turns round the sun, moves parallel with itself, yet, in the course of ages, itself revolves so as in a period of some 26,000 years to trace out a circle

amongst the stars. This is the cause of what is called "precession," and explains how it is that the star we call the Pole Star to-day was not always the pole star, nor will always remain so. We learn this fact from the circumstance that the old constellations do not cover the entire celestial sphere. They leave a great circular space of 40° radius unmapped in the southern heavens. This simply means that the originators of the constellations lived in 40° North latitude, and stars within 40° of their south pole never rose above their horizon, and consequently were never seen, and could not be mapped, by them. In like manner, the star census taken at Greenwich Observatory does not include the whole sky, but leaves a space some 52° in radius round our south pole. For the latitude of Greenwich being nearly 52° North, stars within that distance of the south pole do not rise above our horizon, and are never seen here. But if we compare the vacant space left by the old original constellations with the vacant space left by a Greenwich catalogue of to-day, we see that the centre of the first space, which must have been the south pole of that time, is a long way from the centre of the second space—our south pole of to-day. The difference tells us how far the pole has moved since those old forgotten astronomers did their work. We know the rate at which the pole appears to move by comparing our more modern catalogues one with another; and so we are able to fix pretty nearly the time when lived those old first census-takers of the stars, whose names have perished so completely, but whose work has proved so immortal.

THE DISCOVERER OF PRECESSION.

These old workers gave us the constellation groupings and names which still remain to us, and are still in common everyday use. Their work affords us the most striking illustration of the result of precession, but precession itself was not recognised till nearly 3,000 years after their day, when a marvellous genius, Hipparchus, established the fact, and "built himself an everlasting name" by the creation of a catalogue of over 1,000 stars prepared on modern principles. That catalogue formed the basis of one which survives to us at the present time, and was made, some 1,750 years ago, by Claudius Ptolemy, the great astronomer of Alexandria, whose work, which still bears the proud name of *Almagest*, "The Greatest," remained for fourteen centuries the one universal astronomical text-book.

A modern catalogue contains, like that of Ptolemy, four columns of entry. The first gives the star's designation; the second an indication of its brightness; the third and fourth the determinations of its place. These are expressed in two directions, which, in modern catalogues, not in Ptolemy's, correspond on the celestial sphere to longitude and latitude on the terrestrial. Distance north or south of the celestial equator is termed "decli-

nation," corresponding to terrestrial latitude. Distance in a direction parallel to the equator is termed "right ascension," corresponding to terrestrial longitude. For geographical purposes we conceive the earth to be encircled by two imaginary lines at right angles to each other—the one, the equator, marked out for us by the earth itself; the other, "longitude nought," the meridian of Greenwich, fixed for us by general



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consent, after the lapse of centuries, by a kind of historical evolution. On the celestial globe in like manner we have two fundamental lines—one, the celestial equator, marked out for us by nature; the other at right angles to it, and passing through the poles of the sky, adopted as a matter of convenience. But a difficulty at once confronts us—Where can we fix our "right ascension nought"? What star has the right to be considered

THE GREENWICH OF THE SKY?

The difficulty is met in the following manner: For six months of the year, the summer months, the sun is north of the celestial equator; for the other six months of the year, the months of winter, it is south of it. It crosses the equator, therefore, twice in the year—once when moving northward at the spring equinox; once when moving southward at the equinox of autumn. The point where it crosses the equator at the first of these times is taken as the fundamental point of the heavens, and the first sign of the zodiac, Aries the Ram, is said to begin here, and it is called, therefore, "the first point of Aries."

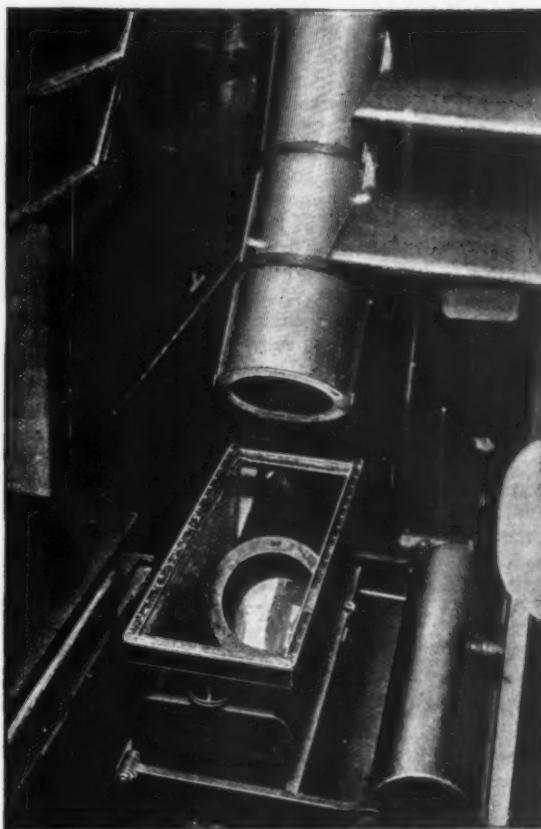
One of the very first facts noticed in the very early days of astronomy was that, as the stars seemed to move across the sky night by night,

they seemed to move in one solid piece, as if they were lamps rigidly fixed in one and the same solid vault. Of course it has long been perfectly understood that this apparent movement was not in the least due to any motion of the stars, but simply to the rotation of the earth on its axis. This rotation is the smoothest, most constant, and regular movement of which we know. It follows, therefore, that the interval of time between the passage of one star across the meridian of Greenwich and that of any other given star is always the same. This interval of time is simply the difference of their right ascension. If we are able, then, to turn our transit instrument to the sun, and to a number of stars, each in its proper turn, and by pressing the tapping-piece on the instrument as the sun or star comes up to each of the ten wires in succession, to record the times of its transit on the chronograph, we shall have practically determined their right ascensions—one of the two elements of their places.

The other element, that of declination, is found in a different manner. The celestial equator, like the terrestrial, is 90° from the pole. The bright star Polaris is not exactly at the north pole, but describes a small circle round it. Twice in the twenty-four hours it transits over the meridian—once when going from east to west it passes above the pole, once when going from west to east below the pole. The mean between these two altitudes of Polaris above the horizon gives the position of the true pole

DELICATE READING

A complete transit observation of a star consists therefore of two operations. The observer, as we have already described, sees a star entering the field of the telescope, and as it swims forward, he presses the galvanic button which sends a signal to the chronograph as the star comes up to each of the ten vertical wires in succession. But, beside the ten wires, there are others. Two vertical wires lie outside the ten of which we have already spoken, and there is also a horizontal wire. The latter can be moved by a graduated screw-head just above the eyepiece, and as the star comes in succession to these two vertical wires, this horizontal wire is moved by the screw-head, so as to meet the star at the moment it is crossing the vertical wire, and the observer presses a second little button, which records the position of the horizontal wire on a small paper-covered drum. Then, the transit over, the observer leaves the telescope and comes round to the outside of the west pier. Here he finds seven large microscopes which pierce the whole thickness of the pier, and are directed towards the circumference of a large wheel which is rigidly attached to the telescope and revolves with it. This wheel is six feet in diameter, and has a silver circle upon both faces. Each circle is divided ex-



THE MERCURY TROUGH OF THE TRANSIT CIRCLE.

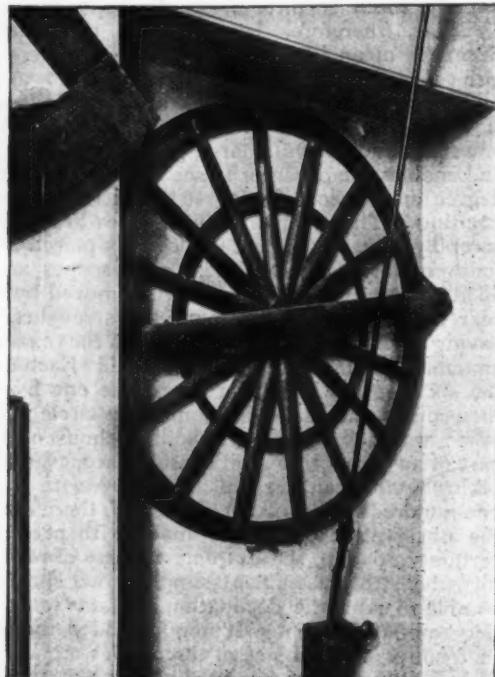
tremely carefully into 4,320 divisions—these divisions, therefore, being about the one-twentieth of an inch apart. There are therefore twelve divisions to every degree ($12 \times 360 = 4,320$), and each division equals five minutes of arc. The lowest microscope is the least powerful, and shows a large part of the circle, and enables the observer to see at once to what degree and division of a degree the microscope is pointing. The other six microscopes are very carefully placed 60° apart—as equally placed as they possibly can be. These microscopes are all fitted with movable wires—wires moved by a very fine and delicate screw; the screw-head having divisions upon it so that the exact amount of its movement can be told. Each of the six screw-heads will read to the one five-thousandth part of a division of the circle; in other words, to the one hundred thousandth part of an inch. Using all six microscopes, and taking their mean, we are able to read to the one-hundredth of a second of arc. If, therefore, the observations could be made with perfect certainty down to the extremest nicety of reading which the instrument supplies, we should be able to read the declination of a star to this degree of refinement. It may be added that a halfpenny, at a distance of three miles, appears to be one second of arc in diameter; at three hundred miles it would be one-hundredth of a

second. It need scarcely be said that we cannot observe with quite such refinement of exactness as this would indicate. Nevertheless, this exactness is one after which the observer is constantly striving, and tenths, even hundredths, of seconds of arc are quantities which the astronomer cannot now neglect.

The observer has then to read the heads of all these seven microscopes on the pier side, and also two positions of the horizontal wire on the screw-head at the eyepiece. The following morning he will also read off from the chronograph sheet the times when he made the ten taps as the star passed each of the ten vertical wires. There are, therefore, nine entries to make for one position of a star in declination, and ten for one position of a star in right ascension. The observer will also have to read the barometer to get the pressure of the air at the time of observation, and one thermometer inside the transit room, and another outside, to get the temperature of the air. In some cases thermometers at different heights in the room are also read. A complete observation of a single star means therefore the entry of two-and-twenty different numbers.

THE MURAL CIRCLE.

The transit circle is a comparatively recent instrument. In earlier times the two observations of right ascension and declination were entrusted to perfectly separate instruments. The transit instrument was mounted as the transit circle is, between two solid stone piers, and moved in precisely the same way. But the



THE MURAL CIRCLE.

great six-foot wheel, which was made as stiff as it possibly could be, was mounted on the face of a great stone pier or wall, from which circumstance it was called the "mural circle," and a light telescope was attached to it which turned about its centre. This arrangement had a double disadvantage—that the two observations had to be made separately, and the mural circle, not being a symmetrical instrument, was liable to small errors which it was difficult to detect. Thus being supported on one side only, a flexure or bending outwards of either telescope or circle, or both, might be feared.

A QUICK CHANGE.

The transit circle, on the other hand, is equally supported on both sides. This, however, does not free it from the liability to some minute flexure in the direction of its length, from the weight of its two ends. The type of observation used to detect any such bending is a little more complicated and exciting than that already described. In this the observer makes use of a large shallow dish containing mercury, and, instead of pointing his telescope up to the star, points it down towards the mercury, and observes, not the star itself, but its image as reflected from the surface of the liquid. He sets the telescope carefully before ever the star comes into the field of view, and reads his seven microscopes. Then he climbs up a narrow wooden staircase and watches the star transit nearly half across the field. Then comes a rush, the observer swings himself down the ladder, unclamps the telescope, turns it rapidly up to the star itself, clamps it again, flings himself on his back on a bench below the telescope, and does it so quickly that he is able to observe the star across the second half of the field. There is no time for dawdling, no room for making any mistakes; the stars never forgive; "they haste not, they rest not"; and if the unfortunate observer is too slow, or makes some slip in his second setting, the star, cold and inexorable, takes no pity, and moves regardless on.

It will be seen that a considerable amount of work is involved in taking a single observation of a star place. But in making a star catalogue it is always deemed necessary to obtain at least three observations of each star, and many are observed much more frequently.

CUI BONO?

I can end this Paper with no more appropriate words than those of Sir John Herschel in one of his Presidential addresses to the Royal Astronomical Society:—

"If we ask to what end magnificent establishments are maintained by States and sovereigns, furnished with masterpieces of art, and placed under the direction of men of first-rate talent and high-minded enthusiasm, sought out for those qualities among the foremost in the ranks of science, if we demand, *cui bono?* for what good a Bradley has toiled, or a Maskelyne or a Piazzi has worn out his venerable age in watching?—the answer is, Not to settle mere speculative

points in the doctrine of the universe ; not to cater for the pride of man by refined enquiries into the remoter mysteries of nature ; not to trace the path of our system through space, or its history through past and future eternities. These, indeed, are noble ends, and which I am far from any thought of depreciating ; the mind swells in their contemplation, and attains in their pursuit an expansion and a hardihood which fit it for the boldest enterprise. But the direct practical utility of such labours is fully worthy of their speculative grandeur. The stars are the landmarks of the universe ; and, amidst the endless and complicated fluctuations of our system, seem placed by its Creator as guides and records, not merely to elevate our minds by the contemplation of what is vast, but to teach us to direct our actions by reference to what is immutable in His works. It is, indeed, hardly possible to over-appreciate their value in this point of view. Every well-determined star, from the moment its place is registered, becomes to the astronomer, the geographer, the navigator,

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the surveyor, a point of departure which can never deceive or fail him, the same for ever and in all places ; of a delicacy so extreme as to be a test for every instrument yet invented by man, yet equally adapted for the most ordinary purposes ; as available for regulating a town clock as for conducting a navy to the Indies ; as effective for mapping down the intricacies of a petty barony as for adjusting the boundaries of Transatlantic empires. When once its place has been thoroughly ascertained and carefully recorded, the brazen circle with which that useful work was done may moulder, the marble pillar may totter on its base, and the astronomer himself survive only in the gratitude of posterity ; but the record remains, and transfuses all its own exactness into every determination which takes it for a groundwork, giving to inferior instruments—nay, even to temporary contrivances, and to the observations of a few weeks or days—all the precision attained originally at the cost of so much time, labour, and expense."

Gregorio's Garden.

BROTHER GREGARIO (the legends say)
Tended his plot of garden day by day ;
Fruits for the sick, and blossoms for the shrine,
Rich clusters drooping from the laden vine,
Lilies, with fragrant cups of pearly white,
And pansies, purple as a summer night,
A wealth of sweets lay spread before his eyes,
Making the ground an earthly paradise.

Many there were who praised his patient toil,
And loved the bounties of the fruitful soil ;
For weary hearts could find in bloom and tree
Hints of that heaven where they longed to be ;
And doubting spirits, worn with fear and strife,
Learned of the Resurrection and the Life,
Saw the dry root with green abundance crowned,
And blessed the little plot of garden-ground.

But, while he never ceased this earth to till,
Gregario longed for higher beauty still ;
"I praise," he cried, "Thy blessings of the sod,
But let me see Thy hidden things, O God !
Give me the wings to soar above the clay,
Show me the light of Thine eternal day.
Once with that beatific vision blest
I will come back and labour with the rest."

For years he laboured on his garden-sod,
Then, through the common gate, went home to God.

SARAH DOUDNEY.

Under the trees, among the plants, he prayed,
And suddenly the garden seemed to fade ;
Uplifted, wrapped around with light serene,
He saw what mortal eyes have never seen ;
Only the greatest saints such glories know,
But may not utter them to souls below ;
For God decrees that men must toil and wait
Till the death-angel leads them through His gate

Brother Gregario, returning, found
His feet once more upon the garden-ground ;
But there a mass of weeds grew thick and tall,
The vine clung withered to the broken wall ;
On earth a wasted year had travelled by,
While he, caught upward to the life on high,
Gazed for a moment on its scenes of bliss,
And then came swiftly from that world to this.

"Brother," an angel-voice said, sweet and clear
"God wills that heaven hath beginnings here,
And in thy cultured garden's narrow bound
Sweetness and blessedness were daily found ;
But work forsaken turns to waste and pain,
And the old blessings must be won again.
Better to toil and watch from sun to sun
Than seek the wages ere thy task is done.

THE SCHOOLMISTRESS OF HAVEN'S END.

BY ELLA EDERSHEIM OVERTON.



JOAN ROSE AND BOWED AS MR. RANKES PROPELLED HIMSELF INTO THE ROOM.

CHAPTER V.—JOAN MAKES A FRIEND.

THE musical party at High Ash produced results on each of the three younger members of the family at Haven's Green : results differing widely, but which were all to extend to far-reaching consequences.

In the breast of Henrietta Rankes both bitterness and anger had been evoked by the presence

and the semi-triumph of Joan Harding. She had not been blind to the admiring glances cast, not by her brother alone, at the young girl ; and she had been greedily alive to the remarks which she had heard passing about her. Her narrow and jealous disposition could ill tolerate to see another praised and admired. In the case of the schoolmistress, a still further aggravation existed in the fact that

Henrietta had been inimical to her from the very outset ; had resented her appointment, as likely to involve social difficulties ; and had been still further aggrieved when she discovered for herself that the Rector and the neighbourhood were correct in the unanimity which declared Joan Harding "a very exceptional creature." This cautious *dictum*, it may be thought, was not sufficiently flattering to arouse jealousy. But Henrietta was possessed of that unhappy type of character which measures all praise by that bestowed on itself. And as nothing about Miss Rankes, from the thin, topmost curl of her elaborated hair down to the shining point of her narrow, patent boot, was anything but conventional, she vehemently resented the appearance within her sphere of one who could afford to be "exceptional" and yet remain a lady. The party at High Ash transformed Henrietta from a passive to an active enemy of Joan and her "mission."

To Captain Rankes, on the other hand, his introduction to Joan had been a bewildering experience. It seemed to him, since that evening, as though he had seen a vision—was dreaming dreams. Never before, in the course of a fairly happy, if wholly prosaic, life, had the young man come in conscious contact with that unearthy element which was so conspicuous a trait in Joan's character. From his earliest years he had been steeped in the practical materialism which is the strong temptation of money-made men in the first and second generations. Slow and dull, and from habit self-indulgent if good-natured, the appearance of this young girl was to him a startling revelation. Her youth, her grace, and the appealing charm which was peculiarly hers, bewitched him ; but it was the beautiful bloom of her purity of mind which dazzled his smirched vision. The enthusiasm which possessed her awoke, it is true, no echo, so far, in his breast. Yet it communicated itself to him in some mysterious manner ; so that, though he could not sympathise with or understand it, he became suddenly aware of the power of a mind whose affections are not set upon the earth. The unselfishness of toil, which looked for no reward except in the welfare of others, personated by a girl of singular attraction, roused him from an apathy and indifference into which he could never again sink. His mental eyes had suddenly been opened to behold things which are not seen ; his moral atrophy had been abruptly checked. What condition of things should ensue from this awakening ? Joan held more than she knew in the palms of her little, soft hands.

Lena Rankes had both more originality and more intellectual power than her brother and sister. From the first she had been, if anything, rather tickled by the situation ; by Joan's "pretensions" and "independence ;" by Henrietta's disgust and resentment. She was accustomed to think things out for herself, and to act on her own conclusions. She was resolved to call on Joan Harding, and pursue

investigations which promised a certain return of amusement.

The schoolhouse had been very much altered since Joan's arrival. The little hall had been stained and varnished, and a large, deep-coloured rug almost covered it. Crimson carpets ran up the stairs, and the walls had been partly covered with some fine old engravings in heavy black frames. The green rep and the lace curtains had vanished from the parlour ; the walnut suite had been consigned to the privacy of Joan's single spare-room. The hideous paper on the walls had been cleverly covered with dull-blue linen. The room was full now of the girl's treasures—books and dainty china ; photographs of her family and her home ; odd chairs and a carved oak table. Place had been found for a tiny piano, and there were spring flowers, daffodils and gaudy marsh marigolds, and tender green-tasselled catkins, in old Delft jars. Joan herself had just finished preparing her tea when Lena arrived, and she and her guest straightway partook of it together.

Lena left the house less critical and more impressed. There was no doubt left in her mind that Joan was a lady, even although she did the most part of her own house-work, and taught village children. And these two facts were the more astonishing when taken in conjunction with Joan's surroundings—her furniture, her dress, even the quaint little silver teaspoon with which Lena had lately stirred her tea. For it became evident that Joan Harding could not lack for money, and therefore had not been driven by necessity to adopt her present calling. There remained, accordingly, but two theories by which to account for the anomaly offered. Either Joan, for one or another reason, was under a cloud and driven from home—and Lena was too shrewd a woman of the world to think from the evidence before her that this was a likely solution of the problem ; or else she was a mad enthusiast. And the more Miss Rankes thought over the situation, the more convinced did she become that here lay the real answer to her enigma.

Lena Rankes was one of those survivals of a generation rapidly and happily becoming obsolete. She had fine impulses and was capable of generous and unselfish action. But her up-bringing had crushed her better qualities and formed a congenial hotbed for the development of less pleasing characteristics. The child of parents justifiably proud of the position they had carved out for themselves in the world, she had early been corrupted by the incessant and boastful praise of money to which she had become accustomed. In her home, naturally enough, people were measured by their wealth—what they had and what they had made—rather than what they were. It was seriously believed that all that was worth having in life was to be purchased, if only sufficient money were forthcoming. Without effort of their own, she and her sister and brother inherited her parent's wealth and position ; and this very fact made

both possessions more dangerous to the young people than they could ever have been to those who had striven and fought for them. The instinctive groping after something still higher than that already possessed, the same quality which had led her father up the ladder of fortune, showed its exaggeration in Lena in a desire to identify herself with the well-born, and an insen-sate scorn of mediocrity even in rank. Her elder sister, a girl of inferior intelligence and weaker will, followed Lena's lead. The tendency, unchecked and untrained, developed into rank snobbery. Lena's aristocratic tastes and fear of lowering herself in social caste led her and Henrietta into many absurdities, and lost for them both much of the enjoyment of life. She had been ill, if showily, educated, and a false pride rebelled at the necessary exhibition of ignorance which would be incurred should she try to supplement the lack of what she had sufficient sense keenly to feel. Her activities, thrown in upon an empty head and purposeless life, revenged themselves. Her wit merged into spleen; her powers of observation into petty vivisection of her friends' characters. In a word, she was as a good instrument which has been badly used and is thoroughly out of tune.

And Joan, whose happy instinct it was always to happen on and to draw out that which was most worth having and most lovable in others, early grew to appreciate at their true value the distortions which Lena owed to circumstance and frailty rather than to perversity. Unconsciously, by her life rather than her words, she held before Lena a higher ideal than any which had before arisen on the horizon of this heavily handicapped daughter of wealth. And that which was best in Lena roused and stirred under the accumulation of worldliness and ignorance which had well-nigh smothered it. It is certain that the attraction which, from the first, the little schoolmistress had had for the squire's daughter would have been productive of good in Lena even had she remained ignorant of the facts that Joan's forefathers fought at Agincourt and were mentioned in Domesday Book. It would be too much to add that the knowledge of these facts was immaterial in the cementing of the bonds of friendship.

CHAPTER VI.—JOAN CONFIRMS AN ENEMY.

JOAN found herself sitting in the large well-stocked library of Haven's Green House. So far she was alone. Notwithstanding the mildness of the May evening a fire of logs smouldered on the hearth. The shelves which ran round the entire room were representative of the model library of some fifty years before. But their treasures seemed undisturbed, while on an occasional table near the fireplace lay a couple of ladies' journals and a little pile of novels from the circulating library.

Joan had sought this interview herself; but now that she was on the verge of it she experienced a tremor of nervous dread. She

had come to speak to the elder Miss Rankes on a subject where she felt sure she should encounter opposition. She wished that her dealings were to be with Lena, from whom already she felt she might count on courtesy, even sympathy. But Henrietta Rankes had always treated the schoolmistress with *hauteur* and disdain. And though Joan could afford to laugh at these exhibitions when she had nothing at stake, she knew that they would weigh against her chances of getting what she believed to be right in the present instance.

A rumbling movement in the hall without startled Joan from her reverie. The library door was flung open, and Mr. Rankes, sitting in his wheeled chair, propelled himself into the room.

He glanced suspiciously at Joan. It seemed to the girl that the little, fierce eyes, that glittered and gleamed under the heavy, overhanging brows, were champing against the restraint and inactivity of their owner's life.

Joan rose and bowed, but a curt nod and muttered greeting closed further intercourse. The squire wheeled himself to a writing-table, where, with his back turned to Joan, he immersed himself in some papers.

Joan waited in silence, with such patience as she could muster, for five-and-twenty minutes. At last steps and voices sounded without, and Henrietta Rankes entered the room, followed by her sister. Henrietta bowed distantly to the schoolmistress, while Lena shook hands with marked cordiality. The figure in the chair turned slowly and fixed its scowling gaze on the elder.

"Henrietta," said Mr. Rankes, in his harsh tones, "you made an appointment with Miss Harding for 4.30. You have kept her waiting just half an hour. Such conduct is most unbusinesslike—thoroughly unbusinesslike."

"Oh, papa! I don't profess to have business habits," laughed Miss Rankes affectedly. Her thin voice, wanting in *timbre*, and that mellow-ness which supplies the ringing qualities lost with youth, had a grating, metallic sound in Joan's ears. She looked gravely at the lady, but Miss Rankes had no intention of apologising. The squire had once more turned his back on the company, and Lena had sat down by the fire, fingering the pages of the fashion-papers, with the evident intention of preserving an attentive aloofness.

It fell to Joan to open up speech, since Miss Rankes said nothing.

"I have come to speak to you about the boarded-out workhouse children," Joan said, after there had been a silence of some moments. "I believe that you are the secretary of the committee appointed by the Guardians to superintend them here?"

Miss Rankes nodded her assent. Her expression denoted her surprise that Joan should cross-question her on a subject with which, manifestly, she, as schoolmistress, was unconcerned.

"There are two other members on the com-

mittee," Joan proceeded tranquilly. "But I take it they are sleeping partners—at least they exhibit no signs of being awake to the interests of the children."

Miss Rankes maintained her supercilious silence. Lena's interest caused her to raise her head and regard Joan. She began to



HENRIETTA RANKES

wonder what would be the upshot of an interview which seemed likely to develop into something of an encounter.

Joan began to speak again. Her pride was roused by the assumption of indifference Miss Rankes displayed towards her. Her tone became severer, less conciliatory.

"As schoolmistress," she said, "I am expected to give a quarterly report of the children. With five I am perfectly satisfied. The state of the sixth, however, seems to me to require immediate and exact investigation."

Now Henrietta was roused.

"Do you mean to suggest," she asked, in a voice whose tremor betrayed her rising anger, "do you mean to suggest that you wish to call in question the home that I have found for some particular workhouse child? That is quite beyond your province."

The hard, little, lowering face of Charlie Curtis rose up before Joan. For his sake, for the moral good of the child for whom she was prepared to fight, she quelled her spirit. She spoke very quietly.

"I do not call in question the respectability of the home that you have provided for Charlie Curtis," she said. "It may be, and doubtless is, a very good home in itself. But it is not the best home for him, and the child is deteriorating fast."

"This is no earthly business of yours," Miss Rankes exclaimed angrily. "I, and not you, am responsible for the children's homes. And I am perfectly satisfied that the Sharps do all that they can do for the boy. He is a thoroughly naughty, bad boy. I am conversant with his antecedents, which of course lie quite outside *your* knowledge. I take it as very good of the Sharps to put up with him as they do."

"No doubt the Sharps do for him what they can," persisted Joan quietly. "But it is not all that can be done for the boy. The mere fact that his antecedents are against him makes it the more imperative that the child should be guarded and strengthened and most wisely trained now. Mrs. Sharp is a well-meaning woman, but quite incompetent for such a task. Her husband, as you know, is an altogether unsatisfactory character."

"You are talking utter nonsense! What more can be provided than the Sharps provide? He is well fed and tidily clothed, and Sharp never ill-uses him. Of course Curtis is deteriorating fast. He is a bad boy, and will probably go on growing worse as he grows older, until he ends at the gallows. His father is a criminal of the worst type, and is now undergoing penal servitude for life; and his mother deserted him when he was a baby. What can be expected from the child of such parents?"

But Joan had risen to her feet. Her face glowed with warm colour. Her whole countenance was transformed and inspired with the depth and earnestness of her conviction. Her burning eyes were fixed on the pale, insipid face before her. She did not notice Lena's deep attention, nor that the squire, whose pen some while since had ceased to move, had turned in his chair, and was watching her out of his little, keen eyes. She was possessed only with the strength of her conviction, and the depth of her great horror at the other's standpoint.

"How can you, how dare you, speak like that?" she cried, and her thrilling voice pierced even the wall of indifference against which it struck. "Are you an atheist that you should thus tacitly deny God's power and presence in His world? Are you an unbeliever that you should declare the work of Christ's redemption futile? Where is God's mercy, where His justice, if this poor, innocent child must be branded criminal from his cradle, because his father and his mother are evil-doers and breakers of the law?"

Henrietta yawned, and with a start Joan

recovered her self-possession, and sat down once more on her chair. Henrietta spoke.

" You are very vehement, Miss Harding," she said, her hand still over her mouth. " But I am quite satisfied with Curtis's home, and shall certainly not move him without adequate reason. His pay is of material assistance to Mrs. Sharp."

Lena interposed.

" Have you thought how difficult it would be to find a better home for the child?" she said, with manifest desire to appease both parties. " At least the Sharp children are always kept clean and tidy."

Joan turned her sweet, brown eyes on Lena. The glow still hovered over her face.

" They do not understand the child," she said. " He is thoroughly mismanaged. They have given him a bad name—or he has earned it for himself—and now he habitually lives up to it. The good in him is slowly dying of inanition. I have had proof of it. They have not the slightest idea how to repress his evil tendencies and draw out what is better. He wants a complete change—a fresh start. He must have it—or perish."

" Then he perishes," Henrietta interrupted coldly. " But the state of things you picture only exists in a fevered and intemperate imagination. I am satisfied that the child is well dealt by."

Joan looked on the speaker, and that same hard expression which Walter Grimshaw's persistent suit had once before drawn out of her crept up over her face.

" Then," she said, slowly and distinctly, " I must make my report to the Guardians independently of you, and I have troubled you with this interview for nothing."

The squire had wheeled back to his papers, and Lena rose to open the door for the schoolmistress. Henrietta bowed a distant "good evening" from the depth of her arm-chair.

CHAPTER VII.—IN WHICH AN ILLUSION IS SHATTERED AND A CONFIDENCE MADE.

" **M**ISS HARDING, dear, you are looking quite pale! Do stop at home this afternoon and have a rest. I can quite well look after the children for once, I am sure."

Joan stared at the assistant teacher.

" I cannot tell why I should look pale," she said somewhat shortly, " for I feel perfectly well, and should not dream of missing school. Besides, Captain Rankes will very probably look in this afternoon, and I should not like him to find things out of their usual course."

" Oh, of course! I quite forgot," murmured Miss White confusedly. Joan was mystified to notice that she was blushing, and evidently desirous of prolonging what seemed to her superior an unnecessary conversation.

For some time past Miss White's passive opposition to Joan and her methods had given place to a flattering, if unintelligent subser-

vience. To Joan this new departure was even more difficult to bear with patiently than had been the former critical and disapproving spirit. She found herself longing to hear Mrs. Jones and Miss Crabley quoted at her once again. The assistant mistress, deserting her previous high-handed and severe manner, had taken to a silly and caressing indulgence of the children which roused the wrathful contempt of the more independent characters among them, and of which full advantage was taken by the meaner spirits. The big boys resented being addressed as " duckie" and " darling." Perpetual fondling palled on the little ones. Joan had been obliged to remonstrate and insist that better discipline must be maintained in the standards for which Miss White was responsible. She had expected that her reproof would be met with resentment. But though the assistant had burst into tears, she had owned that Joan was right, and that she knew that she was " silly and indulgent." Yet, in spite of this confession, Joan had to continue to bear, with the best patience she could muster, with a grotesque and provoking travesty of her own manner and methods by her subordinate.

The head-mistress stood now looking somewhat abstractedly at her assistant. Miss White held her head on one side, and was crimping the folds of her pocket-handkerchief. Her eyes were cast down, and her cheeks suffused with colour. She looked the embodiment of self-consciousness. Joan herself, aware of an instinctive antipathy to the poor creature, was especially on her guard, and anxious not to appear unsympathetic. But what on earth ailed the woman?

At last Miss White spoke, mincingly, and with averted gaze. " Don't you think Captain Rankes comes to the school very often now?" she asked.

" He has only lately been appointed one of the managers, and he takes a deep interest in his duties," Joan responded promptly. She was in some matters remarkably dense, and she had not the slightest idea at what Miss White could be driving.

" Oh yes! He takes an interest in his *duties*—perhaps in some *people* too!" Miss White was looking sideways, coyly, at Joan, and her meaning began slowly to dawn on that obtuse young person.

" In you and me, you mean?" she inquired, rather sharply, and turning on her heel. " Of course he does. We are his *employées*."

So Miss White thought that the squire's son was paying her little insignificant self attention! What utter nonsense! Of course he was paying no one any particular attention. Joan dismissed the possibilities conjured up by the assistant's self-consciousness instantly from her mind. Certainly he had been kind and polite to herself from his first introduction. He was an uninteresting young man, but she was sure he wished to do his duty. His regiment had lately been stationed within easy distance

of his home ; and it had seemed the simplest and most natural thing to her when the Rector had announced that "the young squire," as he was called, wished to take his father's place as one of the school managers. Since that event Captain Rankes had never missed a weekly visit to the school. Joan only desired that the other managers would show the same zeal. Except for the visits of Mr. Bolero no interest was shown by any parishioner in the children. And with the Rector she always felt a certain constraint, bred of what she suspected to be his tacit disapproval. Now Captain Rankes, though not a discriminating visitor, was always kind and hearty and natural. The children liked him, and he would pat the heads of good boys, and chuck the chins of demure maidens, and tell them they must all be good, and not give their teachers any trouble. Then he would shyly offer Joan, "for the deserving," the great bag of sweets he had carried under his arm, and on which every child's eye had been riveted since he had entered the school. After this climax would come his hasty and awkward disappearance—until next week.

Miss White was a goose, Joan decided emphatically. Captain Rankes was merely a kind-hearted man, who was always doing kind-hearted things, and so the silly creature had been misled. Joan remembered how she had but lately traced to him the presents of game, choice fruit and flowers, which she continually found deposited in the back kitchen, whose door she left unlocked for the convenience of tradespeople during school hours. She felt sorry for the infatuated woman, and would have liked to warn her, but felt certain Miss White was too *enfête* to heed her.

Captain Rankes paid the school his usual visit that afternoon. Joan watched Miss White sharply. Her face bore a deprecating simper ; the instruction she was meting out to her class tailed off into arrant nonsense. Captain Rankes was hovering half-way up the large class room, looking to Joan's mischievous eyes like a well-plumed but ungainly bird. Apparently he was uncertain as to whether he might interrupt the head-mistress, who was presiding over the girls' needlework. Joan saw his indecision and Miss White's fatuous self-consciousness. She came briskly down the room.

Half a minute sufficed to set right the glaring errors of the sum Miss White had displayed on a blackboard for the instruction of her pupils. Then Joan turned with a smile to the visitor.

"We never do ourselves justice under inspection," she said pleasantly, anxious to cover the assistant's blunder. "Oh ! I see you have brought more sweets for the children ! How very kind of you ! It is bribery and corruption, but they will be delighted. But please do not send me any more rabbits or game. It is very stupid of me, but I don't know how to dress and cook them, and so I have to give them all away, and that only excites jealousy. I don't think I can refuse the fruit and flowers.

They are really too lovely, and even I know what to do with them !"

It was with no idea of disillusioning her subordinate that the girl thus spoke. Indeed, Joan was incapable of realising the type of mind with which she had to deal in that quarter. But the careless words shattered at a blow the penny novelette romance that Miss White's fancy had woven from such woefully insufficient material. Joan was standing with her back to the assistant, and did not notice the swift look of anger and dislike that the older woman cast on her. She had not lowered her voice, and her words had been perfectly audible. Miss White knew now from whence came the fruit and flowers that Joan so often took to sick villagers ; she knew also, with a tardy flash of intuition, the attraction which lured Captain Rankes to pay his duty visits with such amazing regularity to the school. She had been full of curiosity before as to the source of Joan's prolific gifts ; now she was brimming over with malice. Her self-love had received a severe shock. Joan should suffer for her forwardness.

Captain Rankes's mumbled answer to Joan's mandate was indistinguishable, but Miss White understood him to say that in this, as in everything, it was his delight to study Joan's pleasure. She boiled with rage over Joan's airy little response to the compliment. Afterwards came a message from the younger Miss Rankes to the effect that she was coming to see Joan that night after tea. Then the two walked up the schoolroom together, and Miss White's straining ears could catch no more of the conversation.

Joan had been rather inclined to dread this her first meeting with Lena since the encounter at the "great house." But Lena showed herself more ready to be friendly than she had ever done before. She made, indeed, no reference to the scene in the library. Yet she contrived to let Joan see that she could count upon her friendship and support ; and the younger girl, who, in spite of her high spirit and many interests, often felt very forlorn in her solitary and novel life, was grateful for and comforted by a sense of the other's liking and comradeship.

They had been for a walk together, and sat now in Joan's little patch of orchard ground. A line of tall, white lilies showed up against the hedge at the far end of the garden, and their perfume reached the two on the soft, evening breeze. On one side stood the little schoolhouse, on the other rose the red-brick walls of the school itself. Away over the hedge ran a waving line of fields, from which came the voices of men busy over a late hay-crop, and the shrill cries of children at play in the sweet, dry grass. The sky, still blue over their heads, melted from rose-colour to palest primrose on the horizon, and so sank and mingled softly with the subdued tints of earth at evening-time. Joan, intensely susceptible to the influences of nature, felt the balm of that fragrant evening

pervade her spirit. Even Lena was not totally untouched by its beauty and its peace. She felt very kindly, even affectionately, to her silent companion.

"You must call me Lena, for I am going to call you Joan," she said, breaking what had been a long silence. "I believe we are going to be great friends; we have so much in common."

Joan had sufficient sense to strangle the contradictory exclamation which sprang to her lips. Perhaps after all she and Miss Rankes might find kindred tastes.

"You're not a bit silly, and your head isn't stuffed full of romantic notions. I can see that," pursued Lena amiably. "Now Henrietta is full of nonsense and sentimentality. She always imagines—don't be shocked—that every man is in love with her. You can't think how sickening it is! It used to be Mr. Bolero. Now it is Mr. Shaw—and he is young enough to be her—well, her godson, anyway! I call it such bad form. I like you because you're not a bit like that."

"No, I don't think I am," Joan admitted readily. Scant reason as she had for admiring the elder Miss Rankes, she did not enjoy these revelations of her little weaknesses. But she was fearful of checking Lena's confidences. "You see," she said, anxious to give the conversation a turn, "I find life too busy. I have no spare time for day-dreams. And at night I am so tired that I go straight off to sleep directly I lie down. I am planning to take the children all round the neighbourhood on Saturday afternoons through the summer to see the different churches, and so to give them some little idea of architecture. Our own church is such a beautiful and interesting building. I wonder if you would care to come too?"

Lena's thoughts had evidently been straying, but at this point they came suddenly back.

"Why, yes!" she said. "I believe I would. I should like to know something about churches. Mr. Bolero keeps everything here so nicely. I wish you could have seen the place in the old days before he came! He has everything in such perfect order."

Joan was able to agree heartily to this proposition, and Lena went on.

"Don't you think he is very clever?" she asked tentatively. "Don't you rather admire him?"

There was something in Lena's voice which tempted but forbade Joan to laugh.

"Certainly he seems to me a very able man," she said gravely. "But I have never thought of admiring him for it."

Lena was silent for a short time. Then she said:—

"Well, I believe I am glad that you don't. At least no one can accuse *you* of 'making up' to him. Indeed, sometimes I think he would like you better if you fussed him a little more. But that is his weak point, and one which *I*, at any rate, am determined not to foster."

She sat looking very stern, with her nose

tilted up in the air. Joan laughed now outright.

"Aren't you a trifle too hard upon him sometimes, perhaps?" she asked.

Lena's face broke into smiles as she turned it on Joan.

"My dear," she said, "I like you, and I must have a confidante: I will tell you just how it is. It is all on account of Henrietta's odious sentimentality. She drives me into harshness! When first Mr. Bolero came here, about five years ago, and used to come up to see us, Henrietta immediately thought that he was paying her attentions. I affirm that he never even looked in her direction if he could help it. But she would sigh and make moan, and trick herself out in garments which she chose to consider symbolic—symbolic of her idiotic folly, I said. First she would wear green, for 'youth and hope'—and she always looked yellow and sickly in green. And Mr. Bolero must needs 'guess what the meaning of green' was! Then all one summer she went about in a hideous, top-heavy hat, with a great bunch of lady-lilies in it, because she said that lilies were typical of maiden purity. Such a fright she made herself that summer with her maiden purity. Oh! I could tell you endless instances of this symbolic mania. Even her shoelaces were allegories. Of course when *she* made herself so ridiculous, *I* was not going to let Mr. Bolero think that *I* was pining for his attentions too. So I took pains to show him that he was a matter of complete indifference to me."

"But," Joan interrupted gently, for her fine ear had detected a ring of pain under Lena's chagrin at her sister's vagaries, "but report says that *he*, at least, is not quite indifferent to you."

The colour flushed up over Lena's face.

"Does it?" she said, with a fair assumption of *insouciance*. Then her tone changed. "I have the highest regard for him," she said. "And I do not like being always so rude and stand-offish to him. But it is very hard to change a manner that one has adopted for so long a time. Now that Henrietta is engrossed with young Shaw, I should like to be more civil to the Rector. But I really don't know how I am to begin about it!"

Joan did not see her way to advising her new friend on this matter, and she changed the current of talk by enquiring further of the relationships of young Shaw with "the great house." Lena answered promptly enough.

"He is in my brother's regiment," she said, "and has attached himself to him, though Arthur does not care for him in the least. He continually comes over to see us, usually uninvited. At first he was particularly civil to me, but I have an instinctive distrust of him. I have lived long enough to recognise his style—no family, no position, no brains; wants to marry money and use it for his own purposes. That doesn't suit me. To me he seems an idle, dissipated, extravagant fellow, with a soft

tongue, which doesn't in the least deceive me. But as to Henrietta ! For when my friend saw clearly I would have none of him, he transferred his attentions to my sister. And she will not hear a word against him, and is perfectly infatuated. You look grieved ! I suppose you think it is unkind of me to speak in this way of Henrietta. But you can't imagine the provocation I have to endure ! She has taken to playful, kittenish ways, talks baby-language to the dogs, and exasperates papa and me beyond bearing. Papa is furious with Mr. Shaw, and I should not be a bit surprised were he to forbid him the house."

"But might not that drive your sister to do something desperate ?" Joan said anxiously.

"Faugh ! Henrietta hasn't it in her to do anything desperate !" Lena laughed. "Besides, Mr. Shaw is more anxious to make sure of her money than of her."

To Joan's relief the talk now shifted to less personal matters. Lena told the story of the burglary, now seven years old, and Joan was greatly excited by its mystery.

"There must surely have been connivance in the house," she hazarded. "Were you sure of all your servants ?"

"We thought we were," Lena said, somewhat bitterly. "But you never can depend upon people of that class. Ah ! I suppose that's a sentiment you won't agree with. But then you know you're chock-full of hare-brained theories. Papa and the Rector have quite decided that. Well, we sent all the servants off immediately, without characters, which I thought was rather stupid, as they were good servants, and there was nothing worth stealing left."

"It was not only stupid, it was cruel and unjust," Joan said hotly. "You had no right to assume guilt you could not prove !"

"My dear, don't eat me ! It was none of my doing. Papa doesn't ask anyone's opinion when he's in a rage. I always thought it stupid. And we had had the old nurse ever since Henrietta was a baby. However, I haven't lost sight of her, so you need not fume. I see she wants for nothing."

Then Joan got up and kissed Lena on the cheek.

"I believe you're a dear !" she said enthusiastically. "And I shall love you."

So the two parted friends that evening, after all.

CHAPTER VIII.—A MEDICAL INTERVIEW AND ITS IMMEDIATE CONSEQUENCE.

JOAN'S acquaintance with her poorer neighbours was one which she was not likely to allow to weaken. And they, for their part, were fully alive to the practical benefits of this relationship.

True, for the most part, they regarded her with some pity not unmixed with contempt. Although an enthusiast was a being not included in any of their mental categories, yet

they had a classification which embraced and disposed of Joan.

"Her be a bit *simple*," they would say to each other confidentially. Even Widow Day was forced to admit that her *protégée*, "the pore dear, warn't quite like other folk."

"But there, the childer be wonderful took up wi' her," they would agree, ladling out the tea which was probably one of extravagant Joan's doles. "Johnnie, jus' run up to the guv'ness, and say as 'ow little h' Ada be tooked terr'ble queer, and won't touch nothink. Her might fancy one o' Mrs. Potten's sponge-cakes ; leas' ways 'twill come in handy for supper."

And Joan, in response to every appeal, gave—always gave—nothing doubting. Nor were the results of this generosity, deplorably unwise as it may seem, wholly evil. It built up for her as nothing else could have done, in that particular community, the character of being always to be depended upon, always ready in every emergency. And, never found wanting, she also was never guilty, with the well-meant zeal of the political economist, of turning away the hungry or the needy from her door.

She had kept her word to Henrietta Rankes. Her report to the Guardians of the London workhouse, from which little Charlie Curtis and the five other children were boarded out led to an immediate enquiry. Joan had to answer a searching investigation as to the causes of her dissatisfaction with the child's condition. In reply, she stated that certain apparently semi-voluntary habits of thieving and of passion were growing upon the boy ; that his idea of truth was practically non-existent ; and that he was rapidly growing callous to the feeling of shame. At her suggestion she was authorized to take him to the parish doctor for a thorough examination, and to ascertain, if that were possible, whether his brain were diseased or deficient.

Now Joan had already encountered the parish doctor at the sick-beds of certain of her poorer neighbours, and she did not feel certain in her own mind as to whether she had exactly appraised him. He was a youngish man, with a brisk manner that gave the impression of curtiness, and an observant eye which protected its owner from the many trifling deceptions which his clients would fain have practised on him. Dr. Drage divined with an unerring instinct when a teetotal diet had been transgressed. The village people wavered between their estimate of him as a "very hard gen'elman, wi' ne'er a bit of mussy for nobody," and "a terr'ble learned gen'elman, wot did tell old Muster Black as 'ow 'e'd never eat of another Christmas dinner, and no more 'e did, but was carr'ed out o' that there door, feet first, on December 24 ; for we mus' all be born, but we ain't all buried."

As Joan walked with Charlie Curtis into the town on the next holiday, to seek out Dr. Drage, she remembered her last encounter with him, and did not take comfort. She had

been sitting up for half the night with Sammy Prior's grandfather, who had been "took powerful bad wi' the browntitus, and fetched up every mortal thing wot 'e did 'ave for 'is dinner—the nicest bit o' pickled pork as you mid fancy, and tea and taters, wot was cruel waste."

Quite early in the morning, when the old man had dozed off to sleep, and Joan was thinking of slipping away for a bath and some breakfast before church-time (for it was Sunday), the doctor had suddenly made his appearance. She remembered the reproof he had administered to feckless Mrs. Prior—a reproof which Joan, taking the woman's ignorance into

asks you quite truthfully. And if you are my own good, brave boy we'll go together afterwards, and you shall choose just what you like at the pastrycook's, and you shall have a bag of sweets and nuts to eat on the way home. Only you must promise me to speak the truth."

Charlie's face had taken on a comprehensive and not unlovely grin. "Right you are, teacher," he said, and stepped cheerfully after Joan into the hall.

The interview was to Joan a period of tense anxiety. She had written to the doctor beforehand, and told him all that she knew of the child. Apparently he had made further enquiries on his own account. Charlie's courage, despite his great resolve, ebbed away on his first introduction into the presence of a silent, grave-faced stranger. The boy relapsed into a state of obstinate silence, and the cloud which Joan knew so well, and which was of growing recurrence, came down like a veritable mist over his eyes, blotting out for the time being all evidence of intelligence or soul. Dr. Drage's patience remained imperturbable, but he showed to Joan's mind no skill in humouring the boy, or in drawing him out of his impassive state; he merely took it for granted, and as a pregnant phenomenon. Joan would have given much to have taken the examination altogether out of his hands and conducted it herself. But though trembling with impatience and disappointment, she abstained from interference, and only watched with interest as the doctor, after sounding the child's body and examining his eyes, took certain measurements of his head, and noted them down in a book.

At last Charlie was dismissed. Joan caught his arm as he was swinging out of the room.

"Charlie dear," she said, "I've got to talk with Dr. Drage and then I'm coming out to you. Can you promise me that you will wait just outside in the street until I come to you?"

All the time she spoke her hand lay on the child's arm. He responded immediately to the unconscious mesmerism. The cloud vanished out of his eyes; his expression took on vitality—something more.

"Right you are, teacher," he responded, in his favourite formula. The face the doctor now saw was that of a bright, even affectionate boy. He gave Joan a little nod, partly intended to convey courtesy, partly confidence, and went out of the room. Joan turned hastily to Dr. Drage.

"Well, what do you think of him?" she asked, and her voice quivered with eagerness.

The doctor regarded her with slow and peculiar curiosity.

"You seem very much interested in this child!" he remarked questioningly.

"Interested!" Joan ejaculated, and impatience and mockery were both obvious in her tones. Then she commanded herself, and said



CHARLIE CURTIS.

account, had thought unnecessarily harsh. And then he had looked on her urgently, worn and tired as she was with her vigil after the hard school-week.

"You have no right to sit up at nights when you teach all day," he had said. "It is a mistaken idea of duty." The reproof had jarred on Joan's strained nerves.

As teacher and scholar now stood together on the doctor's doorstep, the girl gripped Charlie's hand with a firm, kind clasp.

"Charlie," she whispered, and she contrived to catch and to hold his defiant eye, "Charlie, you're not to be a bit afraid of the doctor, and you're to answer everything he

quietly, "I am deeply interested in him;" adding by way of explanation, "he is one of my scholars."

The doctor grunted. He had taken a book from the shelf, and was studying a passage which he had found. He hummed the while softly to himself. Then he suddenly raised his eyes and fixed them on Joan, and there was that in their look which, despite her preoccupation, forced her to notice them—a yearning sympathy, a longing to break against the inevitable, a deep sadness which told of the knowledge of the futility of such longing. Though Joan did not read these things clearly, she felt dimly that they lay there, in the deep, brooding, grey eyes which scanned her face.

"It is a curious case—a curious and most difficult case," the doctor was saying, and Joan wondered that his voice could sound so gentle, even pathetic. "I scarcely know what to say about it, Miss Harding. It seems cruel to speak finally; but yet I can prophesy no good."

Joan's anguished looks hung on him.

"Oh, the poor little chap! The poor little chap!" she murmured. "Oh! leave the future, Dr. Drage—leave the future with God! What can we do for him now? What is there that can be done for him now?"

The doctor had turned away and was looking out of the window. When he again faced Joan it seemed to her that, ashamed of his momentary exhibition of compassionateness, he had steeled himself afresh. His face had lost its gentleness.

"Very little, I fear," he said, in his usual curt, business-like tones. "From what you say I should fancy that the home where he is is not conducive to his moral welfare, but it would probably be difficult, if not impossible, to better it in this district. Mrs. Gladding's would have done, but she has already got two of the workhouse children—girls; and only room in her house, as I know, for those. And I could not advise a return to the Union. The chances are that its influences would be even worse for the boy than those he has about him at present. You must understand, Miss Harding, that, so to speak, crime is bred in him. It would require unusual—nay, miraculous—circumstances to meet and overcome his hereditary and physical tendencies."

Then Joan wrung her hands and cried aloud.

"You too! You too!" she said. "No wonder at our criminals if there is this universal acquiescence in the early stages of vice, this talk about this cruel belief in the inevitable! Alas! Alas! My poor, poor child! Doomed to a life of crime! You, a man of science, you in so many words assert it! Condemned to violence and the wrecking of human welfare by an irresistible instinct, too strong to be combated, and of which he is the innocent, unconscious victim. Ah! Where is God? Where is my God?"

Her voice ended in a smothered sob. The doctor had drawn quite close to her and

was bending over her. But Joan's face was buried in her hands, and now she was unrestrainedly weeping tears of bitterness and despair. He touched her gently on the shoulder, and at last she looked up. His kind gaze met her eyes, wet and piteous as they were.

"You must not talk like that, Miss Harding," he said, and though his voice had authority in it, it was wonderfully soft. "Nor I, nor any man, dare condemn the innocent or predict of the inscrutable ways of Providence. Should some wise, commanding influence enter into that child's life it is possible that he might even yet be saved—such an influence, I mean, as you, I see, have obtained over him. But you will yourself understand that such an influence is exceptional, and not likely to recur. For you, I hazard, the boy even now would gladly suffer the pain of self-conquest and submit to discipline. That he is accessible to any such influence is the one hopeful gleam in his case. It is probable that an opportunity for affecting him such as you now unconsciously have acquired will be more and more difficult to procure as he grows older and his nature crystallises. I can—but suggest that, as you seem so anxious for him, you should see as much of him as is compatible with your other duties. You may thus be able to neutralise, at least to a great extent, his home atmosphere which you now deplore. At least, it seems his only chance."

Joan sat very silent, and Dr. Drage watched her with interest. She was an unusual study, and he, who was a deep student of human nature, was trying to read and fathom her. He could see that she was perfectly unconscious of his gaze. Her soft, brown eyes had taken on a far-away expression. From beneath her plain sailor-hat her hair curled and crimped with a crispness which gave the impression of intense vitality. Her fair, low brow was caught about the straight line of finely marked eyebrow into a cogitating pucker. The little ripple in the childish nose betrayed her strain of romance; the mouth was full and sweet, though it had no particular beauty. Her colour, usually vivid and brilliant as a young child's, had fled: she looked pale, with the pallor of a tired, overwrought child. Gradually she seemed to gather together the results of her thought. She rose to say good-bye, and Dr. Drage thought she was going to leave him without taking him into her confidence. But, as they reached the door together, she turned her eyes on him and said, with a deliberation and finality that contrasted strangely with the youthful face:

"I have to thank you very sincerely for helping me in a difficult dilemma. Owing to your opinion, in which I feel perfect confidence, I have made up my mind, should the Guardians permit it, to adopt Charlie Curtis."

He stood speechless on the doorstep, and saw her, with a gay word of commendation for his patience, rejoin her little companion.

SIBERIA—ITS RAILWAY AND WATERWAYS.



MARINE CATHEDRAL, YENISEISK.

IN the whole of Siberia there are not many more people than there are in London, and yet you might put all the United States within its boundaries without touching the edge anywhere, and fill up the gaps and odd corners with all the States of Europe west of Russia. It is an enormous territory, in fact, in which no one district can be taken as representing the rest, so that the most contradictory opinions concerning it appear in books according to the localities visited by the writers.

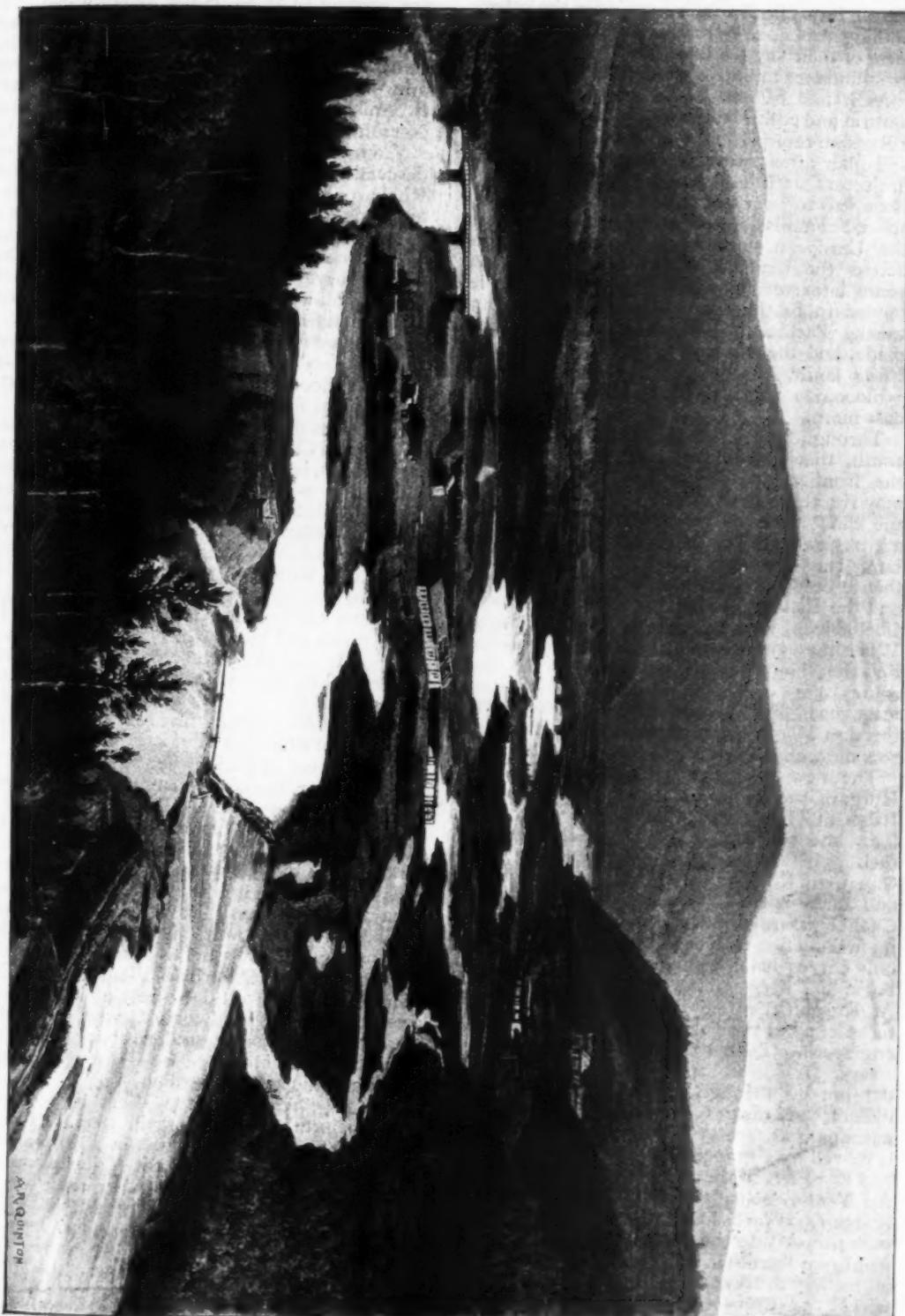
In a general way it can be divided into three zones running right across. To the north, the Tundra, stretching inland from the Arctic Sea, swampy and treeless, ranging 150 to 400 miles in width. Then the Taiga, throwing its spurs northward along the river valleys, as in its turn it is broken into by the arable lands to the south. This is the Siberian forest. "Siberian poplars," says Mr. J. Y. Simpson,¹ "with ash-grey stem and quivering leaves; spruces, with their regular isosceles triangulated contour and dark shading; giant larches towering above their fellows; cedars whose peculiar branches are crowded with knob-like bunches of green needles; Scotch firs with cinnamon-coloured upper trunks toning down to sombre iron-grey; the Oriental pitch pine, and, towards the outskirts, birches with pure white gentle stems, or moisture-loving alder—these form the body,

while the padding is largely left to the small but graceful Siberian spruce, with smoother bark and darker leaves than the ordinary spruce fir. It is a place of gloom below and silent conflict in mid-air." Through it and the third zone of rich agricultural land on which it borders runs the new railway that is to open up the country to colonisation as the Canadian Pacific is doing for Western Canada.

This wonderful railway, the longest ever built by a Government, has nothing to pay for its land, nothing to pay for Parliamentary expenses, legal charges or compensation, and is not expected to yield a dividend for a generation. And it is estimated to cost about half as much as our Great Western, and will be about twice as long. The comparison requires considerable qualification to be of much value, but it is worth while making, as showing the difference between a railway in a populous country and one running through a wilderness.

The great project took about forty years to think out, and was not of native origin. Soon after Muraviev carried Russia to the Pacific seaboard by annexing the mouths of the Amur, an English engineer offered to lay a tram road across Siberia. In 1857 Collins the American came forward with his scheme of the Amur Railway Company from Irkutsk to Chita, which is to form part of the present line. Next year three Englishmen, Messrs. Morrison, Horn, and Sleigh, proposed to build a railway

¹ "Side-Lights on Siberia." Edinburgh: William Blackwood & Sons. 1898.



GOLD-MINE RIVER IN YENISEI.

A. R. QUINN

from Moscow, through Nijni Novgorod to Tartar Bay. But in their case, as in the others, nothing was done beyond a polite acknowledgement of their suggestions, which were accepted as stimulants to native energy.

As it had become obvious that, as was only natural and politic, the railway would be entirely a Russian enterprise, foreigners ceased to apply, and plan after plan was submitted by Russian projectors until sufficient information had been obtained to warrant the appointment of a special commission, on whose recommendation the European lines were, in 1878, extended across the Urals to Ekaterinburg, and four years later to Tiumen, which was at first intended to be the departure point of the route to the Pacific. Further surveys were then made, and the outcome was the railway now being built, which was estimated to cost 350,000,000 rubles, and will almost certainly cost more.

Throughout its length it keeps well to the south, that for military reasons it may skirt the frontier, and for commercial purposes it may run through the richest country and cross the chief rivers as near their sources as they are navigable. The main line from St. Petersburg runs through Moscow to Riazan and thence onwards, crossing the Volga at Samara and the Bielaya at Ufa, to Miass and down to Cheliabinsk, where the Great Siberian begins. When the enterprise was under final consideration the choice had to be made between three routes, but as all the three would inevitably meet near Nijni Udinsk, the shortest—that through Miass, and not that through Tiumen—was determined upon.

The new line thus crosses the Tobol at Kurgan, the Ishim at Petropavlovsk, and the Irtish at Omsk, where the bridge is 700 yards long and the embankment 40 feet high. It then goes through Kainsk, north of Lake Chani, to Kolivan, where it crosses the Obi and turns north-eastward to Atchinsk. From Cheliabinsk to Kolivan it is fairly level, and in its first section to Kurgan almost straight, the only curves being to avoid the lakes, marshes, bogs, and deep valleys that were in its way. At Kurgan it enters the fertile zone in which right away to the Tchulim at Atchinsk the only engineering difficulties were in bridging the rivers. It seems strange at first sight that it did not go through Tomsk, but that city is difficult of direct approach, owing to the swamps and forests in its neighbourhood, and is served by a branch line. Another town that had to be left to the northward was Yeniseisk, the Yenisei being crossed at Krasnoiarsk by a bridge 1,000 yards long. Here the line descends with a rush into the valley, to rise to an equal height on the other side, and run up and down all the way to Irkutsk and Lake Baikal, between which and Chita it reaches its summit level of 3,665 feet.

Beyond Atchinsk the country is mountainous, and the road is one long succession of cuttings, embankments, and bridges over ravines.

Another difficult stretch, which the surveyors are seeking to avoid, is the hundred odd miles by the shore of Lake Baikal, where the track will have to be protected by dykes and retaining walls, and run under granite crags and over brawling streams, and through a tunnel nearly two miles long, where the mountain spurs drop down into the lake.

From Chita the route, as originally projected, descended the northern bank of the Amur to Khabarovka, where it crossed the river over a long viaduct, and whence it struck south to ascend the east bank of the Ussuri and reach Vladivostok downhill from Lake Khanka. On a further survey the route from Khabarovka southwards, known as the Ussuri line, was somewhat modified, and, as completed last year, it keeps away from the Ussuri river for from two to twenty miles. It is thus almost clear of the Ussuri's floods, and is a dozen miles shorter than was at first intended.

The most difficult portion of the whole route, which from Cheliabinsk to Vladivostok measures 4,715 miles, is that between Chita and Stretensk, along the wild valleys of the Ingoda and Shilka. Midway between these towns is Onon, whence under the Cassini treaty of 1896 the Trans-Manchurian line is taken off to Tsitsihar. Here one branch is to run north to join the original road, another—the alternative main line—almost due east to Nikolskoi junction on the Ussuri line to Vladivostok, and a third more to the south, and likely to be most used, to Kirin, where it branches with one arm up to Vladivostok and the other to Port Arthur, a branch from Mukden joining the existing line from Tientsin at Shanaikwan.

The Great Siberian, for the purposes of organisation, bears different names in different portions of its centre. From Cheliabinsk to the Obi it is the Western Siberian; from the Obi to Irkutsk it is the Middle Siberian; from Irkutsk to Mysovskaya, on the south-east coast of the lake, it is the Baikal; from Mysovskaya to Stretensk it is the Transbaikal; thence to Khabarovka it is the Amur, and then follow the North Ussuri to Muraviev-Amursky, and the South Ussuri to Vladivostok. The Baikal is the central line; east of it the works were begun at Vladivostok, west of it they began at Cheliabinsk, and westward and eastward to it the lines are being brought so that it will be the connecting link.

In 1891 and 1892 the West Siberian and South Ussuri were begun; in 1893 the Central Siberian was taken in hand, in 1899 the work will be in full swing on the Transbaikal and Amur; and in 1900, if no other route can be found, it is to be started on the Baikal, which, though under two hundred miles long, is expected to take four years to finish. The West Siberian is open throughout; the Middle Siberian is open to Nijni Udinsk, and will soon be running trains into Irkutsk. The Amur line is rather hanging fire, owing to the much more promising route afforded by the Trans-Manchurian, but the Ussuri section, as already

stated, has been in working order for some time, and, short as it may appear on the map, it exceeds 470 miles in length.

Its outfit, like that of the other eastern sections, had to be brought by sea and river; hence as the rails are laid the rate of construction increases. On the west, where the plant was delivered by rail and road, there is also an increase in the rate of construction, but in a less degree; here branch lines were made connecting with the foundries in the Urals, so that the steel and iron required could be easily got on to the new road, and in many instances, where material had to be brought up by steamer, wharves were built by the rivers, and branch lines run to them.

In 1895 there were 62,000 men employed on the line, of whom nearly 37,000 were navvies, but more were really at work for it. For in-

shovels, others having the wooden blade protected with a strip of tinplate or sheet iron, and others having an iron blade.

The western road is mostly of sand and clay, and the ballast consists of 14 per cent. of clay. The sleepers are much squarer than we are accustomed to and thicker, and instead of carrying chairs have the broad-based rails spiked down on to them in the way still to be seen on some parts of the Isle of Wight line. This necessitates the sleepers being at equal intervals and closer together than ordinarily, so that great lengths of rail have to be prised up together to make good the ballast where it may have sunk or been washed away.

"Throughout its length," says Mr. Simpson, "the line is continuously accompanied on either side by excavations of varying size, from which the soil was taken for its construction. The cause of this is simply that the ground is



STREET IN VENISEISK IN WINTER.

stance, the Minister of Agriculture has to supply and deliver free the timber that may be required, and the amount of this is considerable; for, strange as it may seem, all the sleepers have been sawn out by hand, thus making much waste, the log being rested on two props, with one man standing on it while another pulls the saw down to him below.

Many other primitive arrangements have been, of necessity, adopted. In driving piles, for example, the pile-driver is in many cases a lofty tripod with a pulley through which runs a rope, with at one end a wheel and at the other a flat stone, that is dropped on to the pile-head as if it were a monkey, only there are no grooves and no catch. The barrows, too, are often without wheels, being merely pushed along a wet plank. In some of the groups of navvies the whole evolution of the spade can be seen, some of the party using long-handled wooden

frozen at about six feet below the surface till towards the end of July, so that the upper stratum alone is workable. These broad ditches fill with water, and become the spacious nurseries of myriads of mosquitoes and other objectionable forms of insect life."

The line is a single one at present, but it is intended to double it in time. On the banks the earthworks are 16 feet wide, in the cuttings they are 17 feet 6 inches. The ballast is 10 inches deep, and the rails weigh 16 lb. or 18 lb. to the foot—a very light line to what we are accustomed to in this country, and which will have to be replaced by a heavier one if the trains are to be run at any speed. In one respect there is certainly a resemblance between the Great Siberian and our older railways, and that is in the distance at which it has been run from the towns and villages, most of the stations being a couple of miles or more from the places that give them their names.

As the road was made the bridges were built last, and the trains were worked in the different sections, the passengers being ferried across the rivers from section to section in the summer, and carried in trains across the ice in winter. On this principle it is expected that there will be steam communication all along the route some time during 1900, the intention being to travel to Irkutsk by rail and on by the short line to Listvinitchna on Lake Baikal, which will be crossed by steamer to Mysovskaya, whence the train will be taken again to Stretensk, whence the steamboat on the Amur will continue the journey to Khabarovka, and from there the train will complete the trip.

One feature of the line is the number of large rivers it crosses at right angles. Siberia is a land of fine waterways, which of late years have been much developed. Among the many schemes which led up to the transcontinental line was that by Ostrovski, which met with much favour. His plan was to lay a railway between Perm and Tobolsk, thus uniting the Kama and the Irtish, between Tomsk and Krasnoiarsk, thus connecting the Obi and Yenisei, and between Omsk and Barnaul, thus joining the Irtish to the Obi. In this way he obtained a perfect network of internal communication by river and rail; and on his system, though not exactly in the places he suggested, much has been done and is being done. Another work on the same lines, which will have great results, is Funtusov's canal connecting the Ket with the Kass on the parallel of Yeniseisk. This canal, difficult to make, but only about five miles long, will lead from the Obi to the Yenisei and open up a waterway of over 3,000 miles, joining Tiumen with Irkutsk, and intersecting the whole of Western Siberia.

Another useful canal has been proposed by Captain Wiggins, whose work in connection with opening up the sea route into Siberia is well known. This canal would cut through the isthmus of Zalinall opposite Obdorsk, so as to give a direct route from Kara Bay into the Obi. Failing the canal, Captain Wiggins proposes that a railway should be made across the isthmus. To quote his own words :

"The most valuable result of the isthmus canal or railway would be found in the fact that sea vessels could with ease and safety arrive at their ports in that district quite a month earlier than it is possible to reach the Gulf of Obi, it requiring that space of time to clear the ice from the central parts of the Kara Sea, the ice having to pass through by the sluggish current carrying it to the north. Added to this, vessels could remain at work and continue making voyages along this South Samoyede Land in and out by the straits quite a month longer than if they were leaving the gulfs. In a word, the run from Petchora to the isthmus would take two days, and not more than four from Archangel."

Captain Wiggins is an optimist with regard to Siberia, his preconceived notions of which were, according to his account, utterly fallacious. He had pictured to himself a barren, inhospitable climate, unfit for any human being except the offenders against the law, who were compelled to live there, and who had

necessarily to suffer much privation. Instead, he says, "I found settled communities with municipal government enjoying every amenity of civilised life, some living, not only in expensive luxury, but even in extravagance"—in fact, there exists in the towns a civilisation equal to what is to be found in any part of Europe.

It was in 1874 that Captain Wiggins started to open up the Kara Sea route. It was a perilous voyage towards its close, one long continuous battle with ice and tempest. The crew were worn out, and inevitable disaster seemed to threaten them. The week ended in gloom. Sunday morning came, and there was talk of abandoning the attempt; but, pointing to the Bethel flag of the British and Foreign Sailors' Society he had hoisted, the captain summoned the crew to service, and after preaching from the text, "Be of good cheer, it is I,



CAPTAIN WIGGINS.

be not afraid," he called for volunteers to finish the journey. The whole crew agreed to go on with him, and the Kara Sea was entered with the Bethel flag flying. Twelve years afterwards he made his wonderful voyage two thousand miles up the Yenisei to Yeniseisk.

Yeniseisk is a typical Siberian town. Seen from the steamer it presents a grand appearance with its three fine churches facing the river, and vying with the others in architectural pretensions, while along the road facing the water are houses, or rather large villas, which remind one much of the South of France, except that they are of stucco instead of marble.

"On closer inspection," says Mr. Julius Price, who visited it in his voyage from London by the Kara Sea route,

"Yeniseisk does not, like many foreign cities, lose in interest, for the streets are wide, and there are many fine buildings in them which would compare well with those of most Western towns. Novel and interesting sights were to be met with at every step. Strange-looking vehicles crowded the spacious market-place, surrounded by motley crowds of noisy peasants, who, however, were far too occupied with their bargaining to notice me by more than a passing glance, in spite of my costume, which, to say the least of it, must have been a novelty to most of them. What struck me most was, to all outward appearance, the entire absence of shops, which, as a rule, give so much local colouring and life to a place. Of course there are shops, but from the outside they are unrecognisable, as no goods are displayed in the windows, and only a name-board betokens their existence. This, I hear, is the custom throughout Northern Siberia, and it is easily understood, when one considers that in all the houses there are double, and in some cases even triple, windows, to keep out the intense cold during the winter, and that even in spite of these precautions the innermost windows are thickly coated with ice, notwithstanding the high temperature of the rooms."

In the High Street the importance of many of the buildings is enough to upset all the previously conceived ideas of Siberian towns.

"It would astonish most Europeans if they could see the stately mansions owned by some of the millionaire mine-owners and rich exiles; these houses look as if they had been transplanted from the Champs Elysées or the Bois de Boulogne, and in the interior are to be found luxuries with which Paris, rather than Siberia, is generally associated."

Yeniseisk is one of the chief gold-mining

towns. Everybody in it has a direct or indirect interest in the mines, the money made in them being most of it spent locally. In some of the wealthiest mines as many as 600 men are employed, the miners in the district numbering over 8,000. In the alluvial the workings have been going on for the last sixty years; in the quartz they have only recently begun.

Further up the Yenisei is Krasnoiarsk, a larger and more important town, picturesquely placed in shelter amid an amphitheatre of high hills. It is fortunate in having two routes to Europe—one by the river to the Kara Sea, the other by the railway, which here, as elsewhere, is expected to give a great stimulus to the water-borne trade, owing to the rivers acting as branch lines.

A paper on Siberia without some reference to the convicts may be unusual, but it must be enough for us here to point out that in one respect the railway will certainly ameliorate their punishment by rendering unnecessary the wearisome march of thousands of miles across the snow, and abolishing the long river voyages in the menagerie-like barges. The prisoners are already being sent by rail as far as the line goes, and there are not a few sanguine philanthropists who hope that before the railway is completed the deportation system will have ceased to exist.

BRAZEN BELLS IN ARCADY.

FOR a long time, as time goes in that strange world, my sleep had been troubled. At length the vaguely ominous pervasion became a sense of definite terror. I was in some land of long ago—some walled and gated city of the dark ages—and the plague had broken out. All the bells of the city were clanging in alarm, calling to prayers, tolling for the dying and the dead. A piteous feeling of mortality was upon me—a numb horror—a widespread creeping doom. It seemed as though my personality covered the whole area of the helpless hearkening town; as though my flesh were accessible to the throes of ten thousand dissolutions, and my spirit to all their dark and lonely mysteries.

It was strange to feel in one's own individuality how the bell dominated that old world into which through sleep I had been born again.

And strange what agitation of the soul's deep places answered that clamour and boom of the bells.

Suddenly I felt myself shaken; I passed from old and bygone fears into actual and present alarm. Tolling on my bodily sense went an iron bell, a fluttered, unequal, clangorous bell. And even as I realised that this sound that so deeply had penetrated my dreams was ringing

in the real world, another bell took up its tale, and rang out its cold metallic terror.

And then I felt a long flutter of light pass across the room. For a second I felt it illuminate my face, and saw it bring out the outlines of the furniture.

And then, between two clangs of the jarring bells, a bugle sang out with a clear tara-rara-rara.

"Something has happened," my wife said; "a fire. I think it must be at the convent."

From the lane below there came a cry—a wailing prayer.

I looked out, and saw all the long façade of the convent lighted up in a sinister glare. The dove-coloured stucco showed as clear as at noon, though its tone was warmer now. Every window had its own separate gleam of fire. I knew that this was only reflection; the moonlight, as it were, of a dreadful conflagration. The fire itself was somewhere more remote.

Hastily I dressed myself. By this time all the other members of the household were awake. One of my daughters was ready to go with me. In a minute we had stepped out into the August night, upon which so strange northern lights had dawned.

The bells! still they clanged with that un-

equal toll. Never before had I heard the fright of what they told master the impassive metal. In a minute I knew the reason. A voice was speaking somewhere near me. " 'Tis two girls that is ringing," the voice was saying; "they saw the flame, and the sextons was in bed, and so they went, the one each way, and got into the two churches and rang the alarm. Hark! John Hogan has the rope took out of one of their hands now; I'd know his one-legged ringing anywhere."

The bell had ceased its irregular beat, but there was a slight peculiarity in its present clamour. Without minute local knowledge one would have found it hard to account for its singular effect.

And now we were beyond the orchard-walk that shut out the view of the town. Suddenly there burst upon us a broad glare down in the very heart of the tangled streets.

"What is on fire?" I asked of a woman who stood in her front doorway.

"The town," she answered, flinging out her arms. "Glory be to God! this time to-morrow there won't be stick nor stone where the old place used to stand—only a handful of dust and ashes. Oh, the black night!"

Other women who had rushed out from their little cottages took up her wild cry, and there was a piteous wailing.

Down the precipitous little streets we slid, the loose stones slipping away under our feet; and down the long flight of steps, till we gained the terrace below.

And now the full buzz of many voices rose up to us, through which once and again broke a louder voice—a shout or a cry. Every house was lighted; every door stood wide; little children of two or three were toddling here and there; babies looked over the scared faces of mothers with solemn considering eyes.

Suddenly a dark figure scuttled away into deeper shadow.

"Musha!" I heard a whisper say, "the minister was very near detecting me. And how would I look him in the face with nothing about me but the old—"

"Put my shawl on to you," a second voice broke in. "Faith, you're as unbecoming as a graven image the shifty way you are."

And now as we neared the place of the fire, people were clustered thickly, some hurrying to the spot, others carrying beyond danger their household goods. Already, so we were told, the great porch of the ancient parish church was packed like the hold of a ship with tradesmen's stores. It was piteous to see feeble old women staggering through the lanes and up the sheer sides of the town under the weight of some forlorn treasure of the home. On every hand arose cries of fear, ending always in prayers. The gas had been turned off prudentially at the main. There was not a light anywhere save the little oil lamps that hung on whitewashed walls, and the great lap and flicker of the fire. And so the groups passed and changed in strange alternations of glare and shadow.

One more turn through the rabbit-warren of narrow twisted streets and we stood in full view of the fire. For a moment one almost accepted that wild story of the frightened woman, and believed that the whole town was burning. We entered upon a little irregular quadrilateral, where the old courthouse stood, and from it the endless narrow streets spired and clambered. And all the lanes were alleys of flame; the windows were red as roses; the houses were chokeful of fire. The place might have been Venice, with all its waterways turned to canals of fire. But when one met the fierce glare of the real conflagration one felt that this lambent light that repeated itself as though on countless mirrors was only its innocent counterfeit. Already we learned one house had perished—back, further than one could penetrate in the crowded jumble. And already the flame had leaped across the narrow breadth of one of the lanes, and had caught fast hold of a house on the other side.

The bugle had been swiftly obeyed. Fusiliers, bluejackets, men of the reserve, were hard at it, fighting the flames. A cordon drawn around the square kept merely idle folk from encumbering the struggling householders who had work to do.

Within the guarded square the coils of the hose were harassing the distracted steps of those who were dragging away their goods. But they were idle coils. The tide was dead low. Three months of drought had emptied the reservoir. Hardly a drop of water could be got. Only once in a way a little dash, such as might revive a fainting woman, was flung in the fierce face of the spreading flame.

Next to nothing could be done. The long line was formed to pass the buckets on, but at the end there came only this baptism by aspersions—this trickle of thirsty drops.

The black smoke yellowed; rifts of red showed here and there, the sparks began to break in twinkling showers, then out ran liquid flame, as full as flowing water, and more lithe; it curled, it panted, it licked, it waved in broad flags, it shot up and stood a tall red column; and still nothing could be done.

And now out of the fiery torrent black ribs began to show; they stood out like spars of some old wreck. A long plank grew into sharpest outline, hanging like a ribbon from wall to wall. Then, quite suddenly, as at the touch of a finger, it slipped in, and fell to nothing, without a sound.

And ever as the flames went forward their work behind came into view—uprights that showed like a row of jagged teeth; window apertures that might have been the sockets of perished eyes; and right across one opening that the flame had cleared in that forest thickness of men's dwellings, a blackened beam with glowing points at regular intervals hung like a chain of Chinese lanterns.

It was garish noonday in this burning square. Every face showed clear and white. And all were friends and equals. A lady of title stood

and talked with a sweep. The Methodist minister was listening eagerly to a gesticulating priest.

It was the salutary custom of that priest, nightly at the hour of ten, to traverse the streets and purlieus of the little town, and with kindly persuasion of an honest cudgel to quicken the homeward steps of delaying damsels. Now at the noon of night they stood before him unrebuked.

After a little time we moved away from the central spot to see what was happening elsewhere. In an adjoining alley, whither the wind was scattering jets of sparks, there was wild confusion. All the narrow footway was heaped and lumbered with household stuff. There was the short crash of shattered glass, and ever through the windows bedding, chairs, tables were rolling down. A horse was struggling under a load of high-piled furniture, from which the legs of chairs pointed like rigid limbs of men, and as he was dragged and beaten on, wood splintered and broke under his feet.

Quite suddenly in the thick of this perilous turmoil—this destroying of property to save it, this crashing scramble in the breath of the advancing flames—I felt the whole scene grow visionary and far away. Even with a man shouting to me to stand clear of two other men, who were making the iron feet of a bedstead lances to sweep a path before them, I could hardly believe that this scene about me was happening now. In imagination that seemed intensely real I was sitting in some Eastern land, looking out upon a world that one had always known but never seen before, a languid world that felt no mutation, that bore no trace of the years; a land into whose life Abraham might have passed again and have stirred no surprise, and where even at that moment a caravan was going down into Egypt, bearing on the bunches of camels spices and balms and perfumes.

"They have broken a box of spices," said my daughter, and I knew on what wings I had travelled. There is witchcraft in odours.

And now into that *mélée* plunged the hearty priest. He lifted up his voice in remonstrance sharp and loud. On he passed, calming, controlling, directing. Gradually the turmoil quieted itself, and folks who had anything yet to save set about saving it with caution and good heed. There is great virtue in a big masterful man, clear-headed and clean-shaven, and carrying an argumentative stick.

A sudden turn, and behold the bay stretched before one's eyes. A few old hulks, a yawl or two, a little yacht with a light swinging at her masthead.

And all the bay glowed with fire, and the old fort stood out, leaning on the weeded slippery rocks, and the two points that faced one another five miles off at the entrance of the harbour came forth in one fierce flicker, and looked each at the other as though Judgment Day had come.

The fishing fleet—the boats of Kinsale, the boats of Peel, the boats of Penzance—tacking in, with a westerly wind, their gunwales low under the weight of mackerel, saw that fierce wash of the water, and that red illumination beyond, and said, "God be merciful!—the town is on fire!"

And if a strong wind had been blowing that fancy would have been grim fact. A rabbit burrow of a town, with old touchwood houses eight feet apart, and one engine and no water; it wanted but that wind to make a blaze that should eat up houses in merry gulps till there were no more to swallow.

A minute later, as we fled before the sparks that were driving thickly now, we heard a low murmuring, broken and hurried, and yet fervid too.

"Somebody praying," I said.

"Yes," my daughter answered; "it is that old woman yonder."

We had turned the corner now, and were out of the scurry of the exodus; so we stopped to observe the ancient creature.

She was sitting on the floor of a house that had been half-dismantled and was all deserted; a figure dim and almost conjectural, save when a burst of flame showed her for a moment black and clear as if carved in ebony.

"Oh Lord!" she murmured in cracked intensity, "have mercy on the people of this house. Prodesdans they is, no doubt, but there's a many good folks that is Prodesdans. Oh save them, save them from the perils of this awful night!"

"Good old soul," whispered my daughter; "shall I give her a shilling?"

"Wait a bit," I said. "I can't make out what she is doing."

Apparently our voices had reached her, for, when next the illumination came, we saw her sitting very erect, with one ear turned up in eager listening.

We kept quite still, and the prayer was renewed.

"And not only their perishing bodies, O Lord! but their precious and immortal sperris, and also their property. O Lord! keep a particularly sharp eye on their property, for this is a night of license, and there's a deal of bad folks about."

Her hand went forth very slyly and laid hold of something.

"May naught that is theirs be missing, O Lord! nothing in life; not a table nor a chair: no, nor a shoe; nor a shoe latchet."

Very cautiously she drew the thing towards her, and slipped it almost under her skirts.

It was a nice new shoe.

"O Lord!" she went on, "I thank Thee that it was myself, an honest poor old crather as ever went a-charing, and much respected by all the neighbours, and not none of them Slattery—dirty, low thieves, bad scran to the whole of them."

The shoe was on by this time.

"A lovely fit entirely," the voice continued in an aside, "but I doubt the fellow will be severe on the ould corn."

Again the hand went forth, and then—I almost jumped out of my skin.

There broke upon the air a yowl as of twenty cats possessed—a very awsome yowl.

"Oh, mercy, mercy!" bellowed the old woman. "It was a mistake entirely: the nod came on me, and I thought it was my own ould shoe." She looked round. "Oh, musha! I'm in great need of a small drop of encouragement."

She slipped the second shoe under her shawl, and came hobbling out, one foot up, one foot down.

And just as she passed us, that frightful cat yowled again. The old woman roared, and ran like the wind, as if some evil thing were upon her—like the wind, with one shoe on, and a corn on the other foot. "I never heard such a cat," I said, looking round. I caught a mischievous look in my daughter's eyes. "No," she said, "there was something almost human in its noise. It served that old hypocrite right, anyhow."

We moved round again to the little square.

A good deal had happened while we had been away. The quaint, turreted court-house—with its muniments covering three hundred years of the old town's stormy life; its sieges by Irish chieftains and French admirals; its diplomatic and veering loyalty; its capture by Spain—seemed to be threatened now.

There stood in the way of the fire, constantly drowned with sparks, a small house. If this caught, there was great fear for the ancient municipal hall.

The soldiers had got a stout rope. A ladder was set against the front of the little house. It was necessary to thread the rope, as in a needle's eye, through two of its windows, one at the side, one at the front. But this was hard to do. The smoke rolled in dense yellow volumes shot with flame and spangled with sparks, and there was a frequent slip of débris—mortar, stucco, and charred wood.

A fisherman volunteered. Once, as he held the rope like a lasso, ready to cast, there was a loud call of warning, and he slid quickly to the ground, only just in time to escape a rush of falling rubbish. Then he mounted again, stood for a moment framed in the window, was lost in a yellow billow of smoke; emerged, as the smoke cleared; stood and flung. The rope uncoiled and slid nimbly as a snake through the double window space out into the street beyond.

There was a loud shout and the fisherman came down.

A young sergeant caught the rope and pulled it as taut as one man's strength might make it. Then two long lines of soldiers took each one side of it. Thrice the sergeant's arm beat time in the air. On the fourth beat it came down with a sharp "Now!" Back, back, staggered the two red lines.

"Pull, you men, pull," shouted the sergeant, running in and stringing himself first red bead on one of the two lines. "One, two, three. Now."

There was a sharp jerk; every man's head went back; every man's feet shot out; every man's back hollowed, while the muscle stood in cords on his neck and brow. The rope cracked and hummed.

Then a black chink ran down the white front of the house.

A cheer broke from the crowd.

There was one more tense moment while the sympathetic blood almost burst the head of every man that gazed. Then the double line rolled back, and in one clean piece the front of the house yielded, turned, plunged. For a moment, its length seemed to be closing like a lid upon the whole square.

But it crashed down, harmless.

And the shout that rose must have been heard far out at sea.

The worst was over now. The incoming tide yielded a little water to the pumps. The wind partly had sunk, partly had shifted, so that sparks and débris fell innocently. The climax was passed.

And now the prayers gave place to laughter; girls began to chaff the smirch-faced soldiers. Wafts of whiskey met one now and again. Here and there a man lurched as he shouldered through the crowd.

One felt that the sky had become steel-grey, and that some russet light of breaking day was mingling with the fierce and garish glare.

"Let us go," we said.

So through the steep lanes we wound out towards the west that lay blue-black in solemn stillness, untouched as yet by the troubling leaven of the day. And, as we still ascended into the green orchard-land wherein the rectory lay, the rooks arose, a vast squall of black, scurrying snow, and filled the air with their full, deep scream.

The night was far spent. The day was at hand.

"Thank God!" we said, and crept upstairs to lie down and try to sleep.

FREDERICK LANGBRIDGE.

CANNON QUAINT AND CURIOUS.

WE have most of us heard of the Irishman's gun which had the unique property of "shooting round the corner." Indeed, in the Tower armoury there is said to be an arrangement of a target and a matchlock designed for this purpose. It is always shown as such. But remarkable as must these weapons have been, a large number of firearms constructed at various periods are of hardly less



FIG. 1.—PUCKLE'S MACHINE GUN, INVENTED 1718.

quaintness. Among the more ancient patterns of artillery and small arms there are many types which, though not out of the common in their day, are to our eyes most curious, even from their age alone, if not from the naive ideas which must have influenced their constructors, or from the strong family likeness to some of the latest and most ingenious masterpieces of the inventor's art.

Take, for instance, the machine gun depicted in fig. 1. Here the tripod stand, at any rate, is almost identical with that now used for two or three patterns of machine guns, while the gun itself has nothing particularly antique about its appearance. Yet it is nearly two hundred years since this machine was designed by one Puckle, who may thus be regarded as a fore-runner of the famous Mr. Maxim and his deadly little gun, from which bullets can be poured as water from a hose. Puckle seems to have been a *littérateur* of a somewhat eccentric turn of mind, and in 1718,

having turned his mind towards warlike matters, he patented the design here reproduced. It was accompanied by the following doggerel:—

"A DEFENCE."

"Defending King George, your country and Lawes
Is defending Yourselves and Protestant Cause."

He endeavoured to form a company to undertake the construction of his *mitrailleur*, but met with little success; in fact, some wit of the day produced another couplet on the gun, in which he hinted that the shareholders would be in more danger of losing their money than the enemy would be in from its projectiles. Puckle was born two centuries too soon, not only from the greater scope his inventive genius would have enjoyed nowadays, but because he would have found a conspicuous position in the ranks of those who cry out against the

"unspeakable Turk." For his weapon was unique in that it had a second set of chambers firing square bullets for the especial benefit of Turks, the ordinary set, firing round ones, being intended for use against Christians. Puckle evidently thought that a Turk deserved as nasty a wound as possible. But Puckle can-not claim to be the first inventor to design a machine gun.

A two-wheeled car on which were mounted four breech-loading pieces of small calibre was constructed in Flanders so far back as 1347, while the one pictured in fig. 2, which is still to be seen



FIG. 2.—THE EARLIEST ANCESTOR OF THE "MAXIM."

in the Museum at Sigmaringen, was the product of the early fifteenth century. A Scotchman, too, William Drummond by name, patented a "thunder carriage," which is supposed to have

been a machine gun, in 1625, nearly a hundred years previous to Puckle and his invention.

Though the use of gunpowder in warfare is very ancient, yet machines for its use, or cannon, as we call them, cannot be traced much further back than the battle of Crecy, where a few of

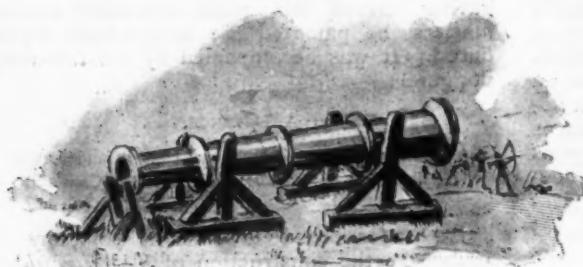


FIG. 3.—CANNON USED AT CRECY BY THE ENGLISH.

the type shown in fig. 3 were made use of by our countrymen, probably with small effect as compared with that of the deadly and never-missing long-bow.

The Chinese are credited as being the inventors and first users of "the villainous saltpetre," as Shakespeare terms gunpowder. It has even been said that the embrasures in the Great Wall of China, which was built about 200 B.C., have indications that they were constructed for cannon, and in an old work called "The Gunner," published in 1664, it is stated that "Uffano reporteth that the invention and use as well of ordinance as of gunpowder in the eighty-fifth year of Our Lord were made known and practised in the great and ingenious kingdom of China; and that in the maritime provinces thereof there yet remain certain pieces of ordinance both of iron and brass, with the memory of their years of founding engraved upon them, and the arms of King Vitney, who, he saith, was the inventor." So conservative is China that, if there is any grain of truth in this statement, the guns referred to are in all probability still extant, and it would be very interesting if they and "King Vitney" could be traced.

India, too, was a very early user of gunpowder, for Pisistratus, writing 1,500 years back, may have referred to it in the following passage about a people he calls Oxydrace:—"These truly wise men dwelt between the rivers Hyphasis and Ganges; their country Alexander the Great never entered, deterred not only by fears of the inhabitants, but, as I suppose, by religious considerations, for, had he passed the Hyphasis, he might, doubtless, have made himself master of the country all around them; but their cities he never could have taken, though he had led a thousand brave as Achilles, or three thousand such as Ajax to the assault, for they come not into the field to

fight those who attack them; but these holy men, beloved of the gods, overthrew their enemies with tempests and thunderbolts from their walls." Probably these were rockets and some kind of bombs.

It is remarkable that the very earliest types of cannon were open at both ends (*vide* fig. 3). Probably the rear end was closed by a piece of wood or iron slid over it, and supported by the two small stakes sunk into the ground, so that this primitive weapon may be called a breech-loader. Most people are in the habit of talking of "the old muzzle-loading guns" and considering breech-loading cannon quite a modern invention; but in point of fact the latter system was employed in almost all the first cannon that were constructed—in Europe at any rate—and it was only the crude mechanism that was employed to close the breech that rendered it inferior to the muzzle-loading guns that supplanted it for some hundreds of years, though almost up to the beginning of the present century breech-loading pieces of small



FIG. 4.—A FALCONET.

calibre were made use of on the upper works of ships. A specimen is shown in fig. 4. Here we see a small gun of the kind called a "falconet" or a "paterero," which, with its shoulder-piece and swivel, reminds one of the

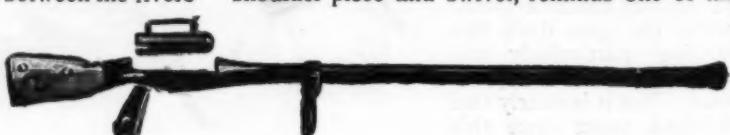


FIG. 5.—CHINESE BREECH-LOADING JINGALL, CAPTURED AT NANKIN, 1840.

quick-firing guns that adorn the upper decks of our modern naval monsters. Its fire for a time was probably fairly rapid, as several duplicates of the iron chamber containing its charge of powder and ball were provided.

These were lifted in and out by the handle shown, and wedged in their place before firing. Fig. 5 is a wall-piece, captured in one of our wars with China, constructed on precisely the same system. But as a rule the fire of the

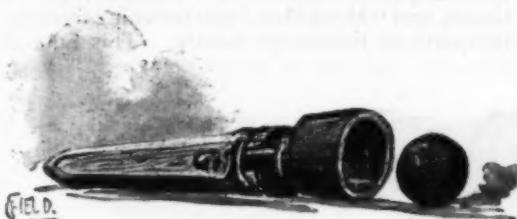


FIG. 6.—EARLY CANNON. ABOUT FIFTEENTH CENTURY.

ancient cannon was slow in the extreme. Even so late as the first half of the seventeenth century, a writer on artillery considered "three shots an hour as much as an ordinary gun would bear, always provided that after 40 shots you refresh and cool the piece, and let her rest an hour, for fear lest 80 should break the piece." Rather different to our latest six-inch cannon, which are capable of propelling ten hundred-pound projectiles in the course of a minute.

But what the old cannon lacked in rapidity of fire and power, they made up for in the formidable character of their names and titles. Here are a very few from a long list:—Basilisk, Bastard, Bombard, Cannon - Royal, Cannon - Serpentine, Dragon - Volant, Minion, Murderer, Saker, or Sacre, Ribaudequin, and a host of others as grotesque.

The early cannon were very short in comparison to their bore, as will be at once observed by reference to figs. 6 and 7. In the latter the diameter of the bore was ten inches, but the powder chamber was considerably smaller. This, which is one of the first specimens of a regular movable field-piece, was used at the battle of Morat, 1476. As time went on, the advantages of length in a gun were recognised

Fig. 9, which is a gun fished up from the wreck of the *Mary Rose*, and now at the Tower, is interesting as showing both the



FIG. 7.—FIFTEENTH CENTURY FIELD-GUN.

construction and breech mechanism of the guns in use in the infancy of our sailing Navy. This ship, which had been one of the largest in Henry VIII's fleet, was either overset and capsized by a squall when standing out past St. Helen's with an English squadron, to

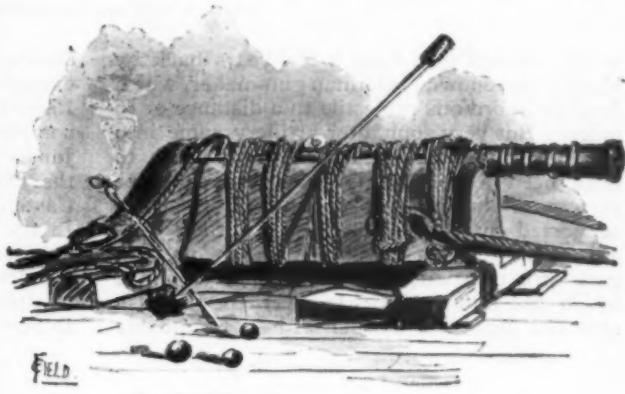


FIG. 8.—CANNON USED BY COLUMBUS.

engage a French fleet which had appeared off the Isle of Wight, in 1545, or was sunk by the enemy in the engagement which ensued. Chroniclers differ as to this point. It will be observed that the gun is fastened to a species

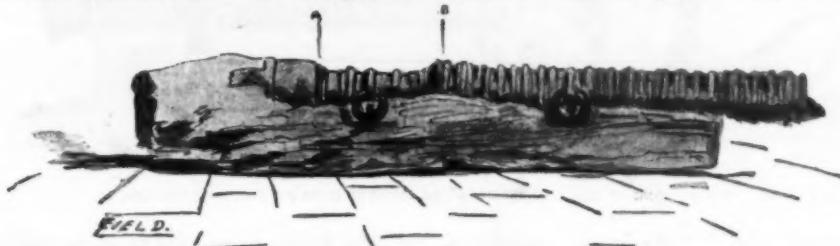


FIG. 9.—BREECH-LOADING GUN FROM THE WRECK OF THE "MARY ROSE."

as giving greater accuracy and penetration, so that longer weapons (such as fig. 8, which is one of the guns carried by the *Santa Maria*, the ship in which Columbus discovered America) came into vogue.

of wooden stock like the barrel of a rifle, and the way the interior tube (probably of iron bars welded together) is strengthened is clearly seen, as is also the block of iron that closes the breech (between the points marked A and B).

On lifting this out, the bore would be disclosed.

We are accustomed to think of large or monster cannon as a very recent invention. Yet this is by no means the case. Moreover, their day seems to now be past, as smaller and very rapid-firing cannon have to a great extent superseded them. They reached their climax

similar weapon which fired 500-lb. shot with a charge of 300 lb. of powder. Among these big "bombards," as the English and Italians called them, "quenon" the French, and "beechsen" the Germans, were several notable pieces, such as the "Dulle Groite" of Ghent, and "Mons Meg," still frowning from the ramparts of Edinburgh Castle. This famous

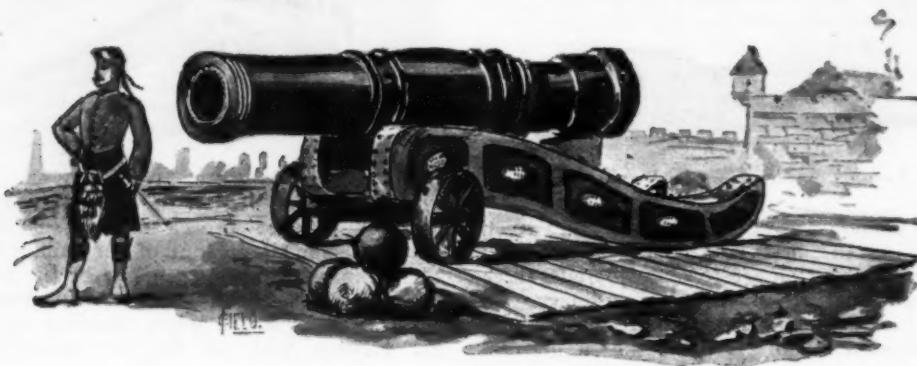


FIG. 10.—"MONS MEG." EDINBURGH CASTLE.

in the 130-ton gun built a few years back by Krupp, the renowned German gun-maker, which fired its enormous projectile to a distance of 16 miles. But very soon after artillery came into general use in Europe there would seem to have been a demand for big guns, and the system of building up guns of iron staves supported by rings lent itself to their construction. A considerable number of such guns are mentioned by historians, some of which are still extant. In 1427 the English attacked Mont St. Michel with a formidable

cannon is said to be the oldest in Europe with the exception of a somewhat similar piece at Lisbon. The carriage (fig. 10) is of course comparatively modern. It was built for James II of Scotland for the special benefit of the Douglases, whom he was besieging in the Castle of Threave, in Galloway, in the year 1455. In the middle of the last century this venerable cannon was removed to the Tower of London, but on the representations of Sir Walter Scott, the great novelist, it was returned to Scotland and placed in its present position.

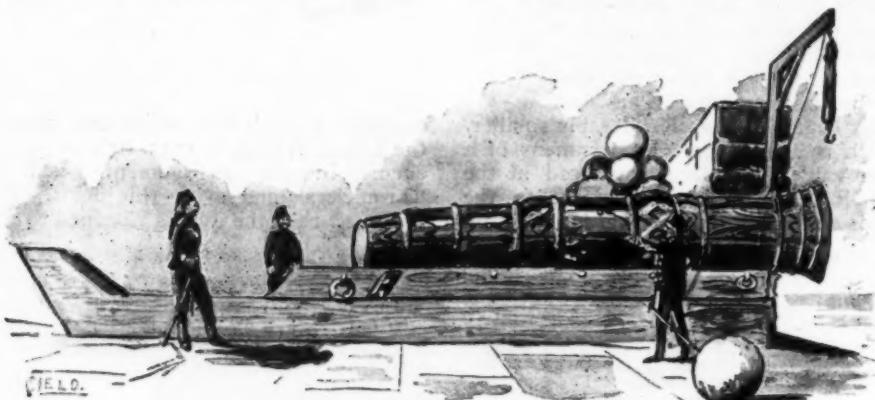


FIG. 11.—ONE OF THE "KEMELICKS" OR MONSTER GUNS AT THE DARDANELLES.

siege battery of "plusieurs machines épouvantables," as says the French narrator, and among them were two enormous bombards. The bore of the larger of these was 19 inches in diameter, and that of the smaller 15 inches. They were each about 12 feet in length, and hurled huge granite balls of from two to three hundred pounds weight with crushing effect. In 1478 Louis XI of France had a

The Turks were fond of using big guns, and did so both at the siege of Constantinople and at that of Rhodes when it was defended by the Knights of St. John. Their guns were not very dissimilar in construction to Mons Meg and other guns of that period in the West, but even bigger. A number of them are still in battery and form a portion of the defences of the Dardanelles. They were known as

"kemerlicks," and were constructed by Hungarians in the Turkish employ. They were of 27-inch calibre, throwing stone balls of from 850 lb. to 1,200 lb., and could only be fired four times during the day. One of them burst at the siege of Constantinople at the first discharge, with destructive effect. Bishop Pocock describes one of iron "20 feet long, in two parts, after the old way of working cannon of

of Dover Castle, as if it were ready to try and perform the impossible feat claimed for it by the following distich :—

"Load me well, and keep me clean,
And I'll carry my balls to Calais Green."

This is a handsome type of ordnance, and must have had a long range for its day. Another extremely handsome weapon is depicted in

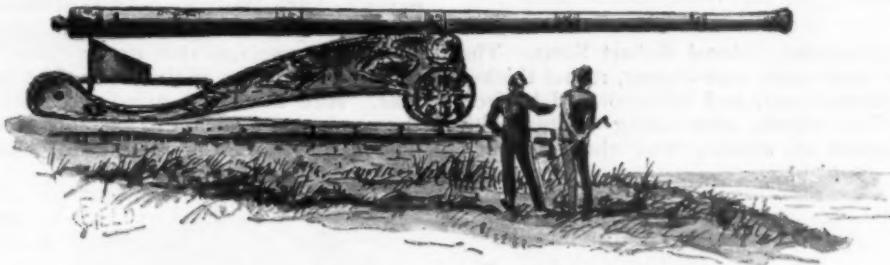


FIG. 12.—QUEEN ELIZABETH'S "POCKET-PISTOL" AT DOVER.

iron in several pieces. The bore is 2 feet, so that a man may sit in it; two and a half quintals of powder are required to load it, and it carries a ball of 14 quintals." The gun shown in fig. 11 is in the Fort of Chanak, on the Dardanelles, and was cast at Bagdad. It is 15 feet in length, and fires stone shot a yard in diameter. One of its shot struck the *Windsor Castle*, 76-gun ship, when the Dardanelles were forced by Sir John Duckworth in 1807. Two similar shot of rather smaller size are still to be seen in the gardens of Cassiobury, the seat of the Earl of Essex near Watford, which were fired from the castle of Abydos, on the Asiatic side of the straits, into the *Endymion* on the same occasion. The larger of these weighs 7 cwt., and the

fig. 13. This is the so-called "gold" cannon which is now at Berlin. There seems to be no authentic history of its origin. There is a similar one in Hamburg, from which place the former was recently brought, and it is supposed that they were made in Holland. The date on them, 1643, assigns them a considerable age. They are of peculiar construction, consisting of an inner and outer copper tube, the space between being filled with a cylinder of pine covered with leather. The outside is beautifully decorated and brilliantly fire-gilt. The knob at the breech end is in the form of an elephant's head, and pulls out, disclosing the touch-hole, while the handles represent nude wrestlers. The carriage is also a work of art, it is made of oak veneered with pear wood,

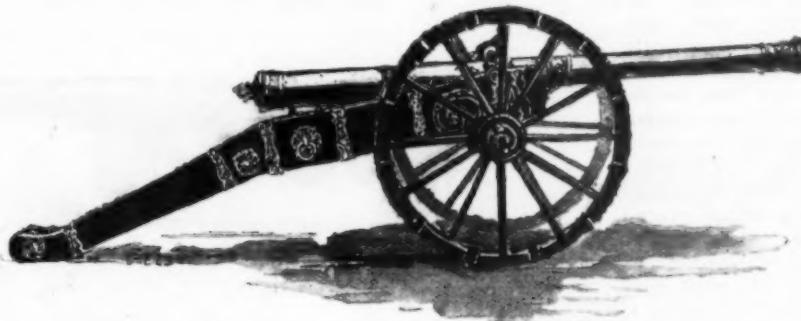


FIG. 13.—A "GOLD CANNON."

smaller killed and wounded no fewer than fifteen men. The size of these old-world monsters may be realised from the fact that on one occasion six midshipmen crawled into one of those at Chanak

As a contrast to these short, gaping relics of the Middle Ages, we may turn to "Queen Elizabeth's Pocket Pistol" (fig. 12), which looks out over the Channel from the heights

which is carefully polished, while the numerous bands and rosettes are of polished steel, deeply engraved, and filled in with black, which has the effect of throwing up the design. It would almost seem from its weak construction and elaborate decoration that this gun was designed for some purpose of show rather than of use. Still there were a good many guns of peculiar and somewhat similar construction in use in

the seventeenth century. These were the "leather" guns used by Gustavus Adolphus in the Thirty Years War. Their inventor was either a Colonel Wurmbrand or, according to



FIG. 14.—A RAW HIDE CANNON, RECENTLY TESTED.

other authorities, Colonel Robert Scott. The bore, or inner tube, was copper, rather thicker at the breech end, and strengthened by iron rings. The whole, after being coated with three layers of mastic, was then wrapped

fully, to the astonishment of the military men present and the satisfaction of the inventor, who was heard to murmur "Ain't she a peach?" However, further trials did not result in the supersession of the ordinary steel cannon. But it at least shows that for eccentric pieces of ordnance we need not go back to the Middle Ages, or even to the last century, though the gun and its "motor car" in fig. 15 are in all conscience striking enough. Most likely it never had any existence outside of the old print which has preserved the inventor's project. A short note explains that the machine is made to travel by means of the man at the handle in rear. How this organ-grinding business made the ponderous affair move it is hard to surmise. The man in front of him is the steersman, who,



FIG. 15.—A CURIOUS PROJECT OF THE LAST CENTURY.

round and round with several coils of rope and twine. A coat of plaster followed, to give an even surface, and finally it was enclosed in a leathern covering. Being very light for their size, they were very portable, and so frequently found to be of great use; but the charge was necessarily light, and they retained the heat after firing so much that at the Battle of Leipsic, in 1631, the charges ignited as they were being placed in the guns. This led to their being discarded as dangerous. A gun very much of this description is to be seen in the Palace Armoury at Malta, while a somewhat similar weapon was in use about the same period in Switzerland, in which lime replaced the rope and twine. But discredited as these guns became, an inventor has recently proposed a similar type, which is shown in section in fig. 14. The black portion is steel, the remainder a mass of strips of raw hide specially prepared, wrapped round and round the gun, and fixed together with cement. The preliminary trials passed off fairly success-

fully, to the astonishment of the military men present and the satisfaction of the inventor, who was heard to murmur "Ain't she a peach?" However, further trials did not result in the supersession of the ordinary steel cannon. But it at least shows that for eccentric pieces of ordnance we need not go back to the Middle Ages, or even to the last century, though the gun and its "motor car" in fig. 15 are in all conscience striking enough. Most likely it never had any existence outside of the old print which has preserved the inventor's project. A short note explains that the machine is made to travel by means of the man at the handle in rear. How this organ-grinding business made the ponderous affair move it is hard to surmise. The man in front of him is the steersman, who,

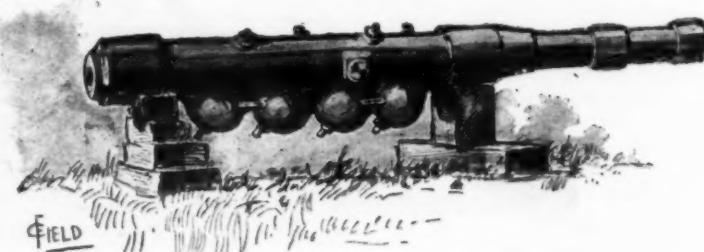


FIG. 16.—"OLD SOW," HASKELL'S MULTICHARGE GUN.

with a pair of reins, turns the front wheels in the desired direction. He is seated in a post of danger on the top of the powder magazine. The other two are the artillerists, and the gun probably is a breech-loader. "Haskell's Multicharge Gun" (fig. 16), however, "takes the cake," to use a vulgar term, for an extraordinary appearance. It is an experimental gun of recent date, and an unsuccessful one. It has been nicknamed the "Old Sow," and was made of cast iron. The idea was to accelerate the progress of the projectile through the barrel by its passing over four receptacles for powder which the flame of the original

discharge would ignite in succession. A second and modified gun was built of steel; but these weird pieces of ordnance will not probably be

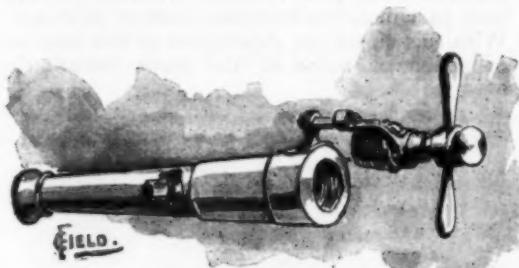


FIG. 17.—MONTIGNY BREECH-LOADER, 1833.

repeated. In figs. 17 and 18 may be seen two specimens of the gun-inventor's art in the early part of the present century. The first is

brought out by a Frenchman, M. Coigny, in 1828, the one shown in the picture being cast in 1837, the year of Her Majesty's accession. It was to fire balls two and a half inches in diameter, the chambers being brought successively in line with the barrel and screwed hard against it by means of the handle shown at the breech end. It did not achieve success. The next two sketches (figs. 19 and 20) show what may be improvised on an emergency when driven by "necessity, the mother of invention." The first was made use of by the Sepoy mutineers, at Meerut, in 1857, and is constructed from the iron socket of a telegraph pole, strengthened by bindings of telegraph wire, and fastened to the carriage by iron hoops. The wheels and carriage were castings, and a rough elevating screw terminating in a ring was provided. Several of these were made and loaded with chopped up wire. Probably they proved more disastrous to their makers

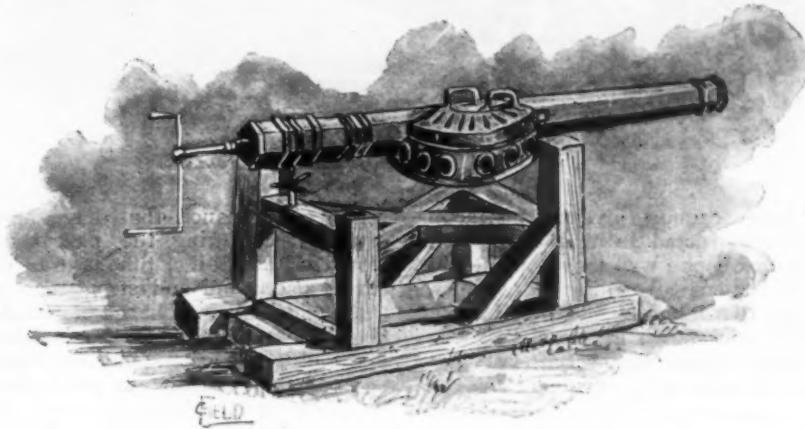


FIG. 18.—A "CANNON-REVOLVER" OF 1828.

a breech-loading cannon of a fairly practicable nature, which was the invention of M. Montigny, of Brussels, in 1833. Guns on this system were experimented with by the Russians three years later; but though the trials appear to have been satisfactory, it was not adopted, probably on account of its novelty, for in

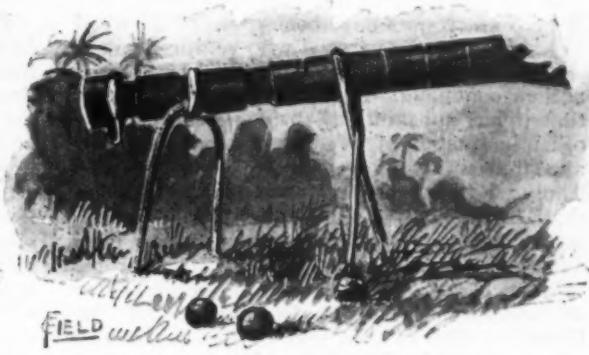


FIG. 19.—IMPROVISED FIELD-PIECE, MADE BY SEPOY MUTINEERS.

those days novelties were not so eagerly sought after as now, but rather regarded askance. Its cost in comparison with muzzle-loaders would also be against it. The "cannon-revolver" was

than to the British soldiers. One, at any rate, burst, and disabled three men. The other makeshift gun was used in 1857 by the

Brazilian rebels in Rio Grande do Sul, and is made of a gas-pipe, strengthened by other larger sections of a pipe placed over it. From its appearance it is quite possible that it was a

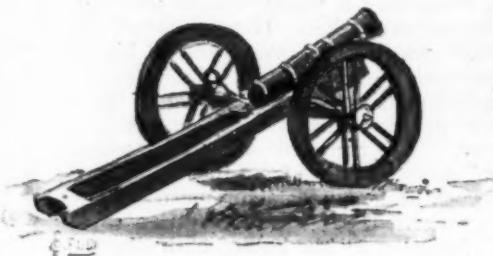


FIG. 20.—GUN IMPROVISED FROM GAS-PIPE.

dangerous machine to handle. The last sketch (fig. 21) is a steam gun, a weapon that has several times been tried, but never so successfully as to supersede the ordinary gunpowder cannon, or even to compete with it. Leonardo da Vinci describes a steam gun in a MS. of 1500, while another is mentioned by Van Etten

Baltimore and Ohio Railway in the American Civil War. It was provided with a bullet-proof shield, and fired from one hundred to five hundred balls in a minute. Whether it ever took part in active hostilities cannot be stated. With this closes our description of this random collection of some of the more remarkable

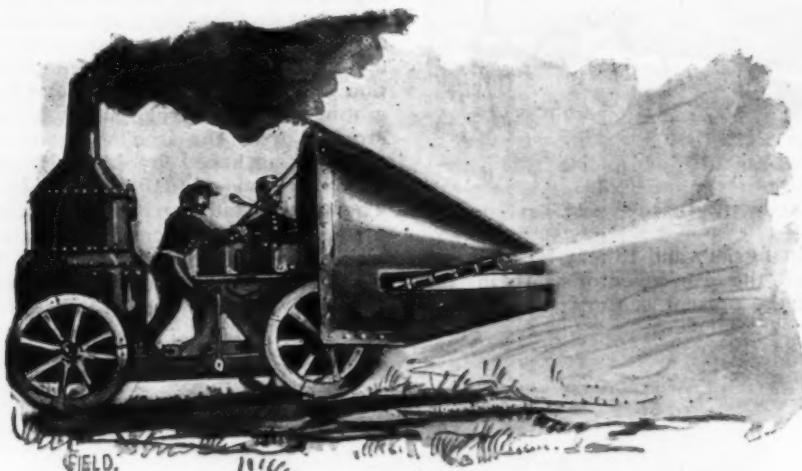


FIG. 21.—STEAM GUN USED IN THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR.

in 1629. A steam cannon, invented by Jacob Perkins, was constructed in this country in 1824, and such a weapon was shown at the old Polytechnic in Regent Street, in 1855, which was said to fire two hundred and fifty bullets a minute. The one shown in the sketch was known as "The Winans Steam Battery," and was used in protecting a viaduct on the

types of ordnance that have appeared and disappeared during the past 500 years. It would seem that if a tube is to be constructed, closed at one end and strong enough to stand the explosion of a charge of powder, there is absolutely no finality to the varieties of form, material, and construction that it may take.

C. FIELD, MAJOR R.M.

CURIOSITIES OF WORDS.

MANY accounts have been given of the word ASSASSIN by persons who ventured to explain it without having sufficient materials at their command. In the dictionary it is shown that it has substantially the same form in the other languages of Western Europe, and first appeared as a Latin or Italian plural, *assassinii*. Those who used the word were, therefore, aware that in its native tongue it was a plural, although, like *bedouin*, *cherubin*, it has been adopted in a singular sense. The Arabic original is *hashshashin*, and signifies an "eater of hashish or hemp." In the time of the Crusades there was a sect of fanatics, one of whom was told off by their chief to murder any Christian prince who made himself conspicuous as an enemy of the Moslems—for instance, our Edward I. By way of preparing themselves for these deeds of blood they threw themselves into a state of intoxication by the use of hemp.

BACHELOR is but little altered from the form *bacheler*, in which it was taken into the language from French in the thirteenth century. At that time it signified a young knight who followed the banner of another. Hence it came to signify one who was in the lowest rank of his calling or profession—for instance, a junior member of a trade guild, or one who has only taken the lowest degree at a University, and is not yet a master. The common sense of "unmarried man" seems to arise from this—that as far as age goes he is qualified for marriage without being married. It has often been imagined that *bachelor*, as the holder of a degree, was somehow connected with Latin *bacca lauri*, laurel berry, and the notion is strengthened by the use of the French *baccalaureat* as the name for the degree. The only apparent ground for this is that the Latin form *baccalarius* was altered punningly into *baccalaureus*.

A WYCH TOWN AND ITS NEIGHBOURHOOD.



A "WYCH TOWN"! What does that mean? The word is strange; new, at least, to many ears.

But wych, or wich, is an old word; old as the days of our Saxon forefathers, to whom it signified a dwelling-place or hamlet; while the Danes called a crack or arm of the sea *wick*, as Greenwich, Berwick, perhaps meaning thereby a port where men might dwell. Some people suppose it must have denoted salt to the Britons, because the term is still familiar to natives of Worcestershire and Cheshire, where this affix denotes a town—as Droitwich, Middlewich, Northwich—in which salt is worked, and where it has been worked since perhaps the Roman days. Wherefore, these towns are still termed collectively the "wishes." But, again, where the earth produced the precious boon of salt, there naturally men would dwell.

Beneath the green pastures of both these rich shires there lie great beds of rock-salt; hidden stores of savour and goodness to man and beast, that bubbling brine springs first brought to the upper world of light. And over these, from early times, the lords of the manors, earls, or thanes, built rude salt-houses; further, some writers think the springs were even held as sacred, so greatly was their possession prized. Certain at least it is that at Nantwich an ancient custom of "blessing the brine" still lingered till one hundred years ago.

This same Nantwich, or as the Britons called

it, "Halen Gwyn," the white salt town, shall be my theme.

It is only a small town, upon the brown, willow-hung Weaver, that winds through meadows grazed by large herds of cattle. But it is quaint from both the colouring and architecture of its black and white houses, their steep tiled roofs weather-tinted to subdued warm tones; with interiors often "brown studies" of sober beauty, all panelled in fine-grained oak that was once a living tree in leaf, before even Tudors ruled the land; pleasing, withal, in its setting of lush, level meads studded with Jacobean halls, ruined castles, Norman abbeys that King Hal gave to his nobles for family mansions, and Norman churches that were barricaded and besieged during the civil war. So agreeable, indeed, is the impression of my stay, so health-giving are the salt baths and pure air, that in my gratitude I feel like a child who cries aloud to his playmates, "I have found a new place, all by my own self! Come and see it."

As for the cause which led me hither to the salt springs, that—in the words of old chroniclers—shall be thus shortly set forth. When the wet skies and chill breezes of August of 1896 bade aching muscles remember the sins of one's fathers, I had bethought me longingly of the blue-green lake of sunny Aix-les-Bains; of the deep pine woods of many a German health-haunt. But in vain!

Then said I, "Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? I will try the brine baths of Nantwich." For I had heard of their excellence; as also that the Nantwich Hotel was really a pleasant country house, set among trees and fields, "Shrewbridge Hall" having been till lately the home of a family of local gentry. Which report proved true; so that I came, lingered, and in the end was loth to leave.

"It will be quiet—yes! to dulness," pitying voices had dissuadingly uttered. In winter, of course, Nantwich is a capital hunting country; five packs of hounds near. But now—well, the roads may be good for "biking."

They were so! as Irish peasants say, in emphatic praise: straight roads, good and level for miles. On either hand what fine hedgerows and wide meadows, grazed by herds of cattle so numerous that one thought vaguely of a Dutch landscape; which fancy is also strengthened by the well-wooded country, the sleepy canal, and the comfortable air of the fine farms and trim cottages set knee-deep in blooming gardens. Never a hovel to be seen!

Deaf to all croaking warnings, to me the intense quiet of our pleasant hostelry proved as soothing as a sea voyage. At nights not a sound came through the open window but at times the long, level roar of an express train thundering past to Crewe; an artery connecting us with London, the "great heart of the world," yet undisturbing our peace in this green seclusion. Then in the mornings, how refreshing for town-jaded eyes to sit in a balcony, or on the trim lawn, and watch the kine grazing under the big trees of the park, beyond which are glimpses of more pastures and woodland of this fair county palatine. For Cheshire boasts so proud a title, because its Earl of Chester had in former days the rights of life and death over his vassals.

But what of the baths? After breakfast is the best time to test their invigorating properties. So we seek the new and most commodious wing added to the old hall that raises a smile; it is so like a callow gosling overshadowing its comfortable brown duck foster-mother. Into a hot bath you sink, and therein float for twenty minutes, fastened down by a bar. For so great is the buoyancy of the brine, that nothing, except perhaps that of the Dead Sea, can equal it; while only Lot's wife may compare with your pickled self, fair dame or damsel, after your dip. (Analysis gives the specific gravity of this brine as 1142·76.)

"But you should try the needle-bath," urges the attendant. "It will make you feel as hactive as if you wanted to jump over an 'edge'!" This with much emphasis. Well, one really does. Not quite a hedge, perhaps, but some of the stiles in the neighbouring field-paths. Thereafter rest is sweet, and the relaxed muscles even plead for an hour or two of happy idling.

By afternoon will you take a walk with me,

friend who readest this page, and for a few minutes of leisure see Nantwich with mine eyes? We will go either by the lane leading above the river to Barker Street (meaning tanner's street, from the oak-bark used in tanning); or by the road to Pillory Street—suggestive name! Is there not a local saying also, namely, "to scold like a wych woman," recalling another and ungallant punishment of our rude ancestors which they applied to shrews?

Down yonder near the bridge are the springs and town baths; and there stood, doubtless, the first salt-houses which, in the reign of Edward the Confessor, the King and Earl Edwin divided between them to great profit. After the Conquest, these, with the town and adjoining lands, fell to the share of the Norman baron of Malbank, whence Nantwich is often referred to in ancient deeds as Wich Malbank. But the old name clung to the lips of the peasants; so that when the last Norman lord left his castle to a daughter, and when the fair abbey of Combermere, endowed by a previous baron, was suppressed at the Reformation, then Namptwiche was the fashionable name given to the old town by the beruffed gentles and dames of "great Eliza's glorious reign." This corruption was later cast aside, and Nantwich, as now written, became modish along with such innovations as tea and oranges.

(For which scraps of lore and many more I am richly indebted to the "History of Nantwich," by Mr. Hall. Would that more of our English old towns had likewise native chroniclers so painstaking!)

Passing delicately like Agag over the cobble-stoned streets, mostly narrow and curving, towards the goal of our walk, seen from afar across the fields, we stand surprised on reaching it. What a noble red sandstone church rises before our eyes, towering mid-most of the little town! How venerable, how grand, with its central octagonal tower embattled, as are the parapets; with its high crocketed pinnacles and tall traceried windows. One marvels to come upon so plainly wealthy an abbey church in little Nantwich. But the reason therefor is not far to seek—not further than the former monastery of Combermere, some few miles distant, which owned this fair house of prayer for four hundred years, till bluff King Hal swept monks out of the land with as little ceremony as he beheaded his wives.

Let us pause outside the church to admire the exquisite colouring of the weather-beaten walls—dumb history of its crumbling stones. 'Tis almost pity that the front has been so carefully restored by the late Sir Gilbert Scott, for it looks well-nigh new in contrast with the ancient sides.

Entering softly into the space and silence of the cruciform sacred pile, here by the inner door is where a weekly dole of some eighty or ninety loaves is still given to the poor after the Sunday morning service. Why was no painter by—one with a love of lingering old English

customs—to sketch the homely and touching ceremony when it gladdened mine eyes?

In the chancel, besides its goodly carved pulpits twain, one ancient one of stone, one of Jacobean time, made in wood, there are beautiful oaken stalls, brought hither, legend tells, from the old abbey of Vale Royal—who knows how long ago? See how waggishly these are carved beneath with rude images of foxes and fowls, devils or apes!

Seeking, again, the sweet outer air, how some of the houses across the grassy plot of the church-square impress one with the peace of old age! Those two opposite are perfect specimens of Cheshire homes in Elizabethan days.

Admire with me the agreeable patterns of the woodwork, and strong effect with which the tarred black timbers stand out against the snowy walls. Mark the slightly overhanging upper storeys, which please the eye, the broad latticed windows, the pointed gables. And most like there are quaint devices on the transverse beams of a cat, or figure, and, above all, a pious saying in old lettering under some window, or an inscription in honour of good Queen Bess.

Nantwich is verily a true Elizabethan town; and for this reason: One bitter winter's night during her reign, there was a cry of fire from a dwelling-house! Fire! and all the roofs were of thatch, and the homes snugly lined with panelled oak. The sparks leapt from gable to gable; the cry spread from narrow street to street. Imagine how the interiors must have blazed and crackled; and the roar with which the roofs fell in, and the flames sprung up high till miles away, over the level meads, folk saw and shuddered. Next morning the church stood alone among the smoking ruins of Nantwich.

Many inscriptions like the following still upon a grocer's shop tell what followed:

GOD GRANTE OVR RYAL QVEEN
IN ENGLAND LONGE TO RAIN,
FOR SHE HAS PVT HER HELPING
HAND TO BILD THIS TOWNE AGAIN.
THOMAS CLEASE MADE THIS WORKE
THE YEARE OF OVR LORDE
GOD, 1584.

Thus by royal largesse, but also by noble private endeavour and gifts, the dwellings rose again, clustering round their church. In the latter there existed a long inscription on a tomb, unhappily removed on the late restoration, praising the gift of a private burgess to

"This Namptwiche town
When fire had frett her face and burnt her downe."

Twice again during its quiet long life has Nantwich been sorely tried; who knows, chastised?

Yet when its citizens meekly recorded the afflictions "sent by Providence" to humble

them, they seem to have thought themselves so punished for carelessness begotten by over-comfort. Whereas, in truth, they were living in such whitewashed uncleanliness and discomfort of small, ill-drained, and crowded dwellings, had they but known it, as broke wise Nature's laws, which God meant man to read by the candle of his understanding. Imagine this town—too cramped and crowded today—huddled in the old fighting times for safety round its castle and within its earthen walls, praying on Sundays over the corpses of its good citizens, buried freshly under the church-floor, living without sweet air, sufficient light, or baths.



NANTWICH CHURCH.

The three trials of Nantwich, then, were as follows:—

The great fire in 1583, which, burning for twenty days, destroyed most part of the town. Queen Elizabeth thereupon sent a large sum of private bounty to rebuild the same, the country likewise helping with gifts that flowed in for the space of two years.

And secondly came the affliction of the Plague in 1604. The more wealthy townsfolk fled to the country, but some four hundred to five hundred citizens died, it would seem. "No marriages, few baptisms were recorded all that

year," says the Parish Book, "*by reason of the plague which hinder'd the good proceedinge of the Regester.*"

Lastly, the cholera of 1849 caused one hundred and eighty deaths in fourteen weeks, so that the churchyard could hold no more graves, and a fresh burial-ground was bought; meanwhile, grass grew in the streets of the stricken town. Later, to clear the air it was proposed to fire cannon down the streets. But in the end, a cup of vitriol was given to every household, and at a certain hour, when the church bells rang a peal, each door was closed, and all dwellings fumigated. A most successful experiment! And now Nantwich may say, laying these lessons to heart, "sweet are the uses of adversity."

One of the picturesque houses opposite the church in the High Street, that one with the

book," says Mr. Lovatt, as we return to the shop. "She has the names of the Prince of Wales and of the Duchess of York—"

"In their own hand. And I do not allow anyone to write in my book who is not a good Conservative," breaks in his sister, displaying her treasure. "Yes; there are a good many great names here, as you will see. But it is the wish of my life to have the signature of our good Queen. Ah! that would make me happy."

Our way next leads down Hospital Street, so-called because by a former town-gate here stood for five centuries the Bede-house or Hospell, which was also "the chantrey of the blessed Nicholas of Wich Malbank." Therein the poor were fed and the strangers given hospitality, if needy, as they entered Nantwich—prayed for, as they departed next day. At the other end of the town stood the Lazar-house, where, in the name of St. Lawrence, like pity was shown to unhappy lepers.

At the end of Hospital Street stands a specially fine example of a black and white house. "Churche's Mansion," as saith an inscription under one casement, was owned by "Rycharde Churche and Margery hys wyfe"; another writing on the wall adds the builder's name who wrought it, "in the reane of our noble queene elezabeth." Its different gables, high-pitched roofs, and one oddly arched chimney fitly surmount those quaint-patterned walls and wide windows. With good Cheshire civility the proprietors kindly showed me

the interior one day, when I was led hither by a Nantwich cicerone.

Through a solid porch with stout benches and a spyhole, we entered into a lower parlour, filling the whole width of the house; it was made cosy by a deep recess, as also by glimpses of a pleasant garden behind. Above, an upper parlour or hall corresponded exactly with that below, while both were floored with huge planks. "Just half-trees dressed with the axe," said the owner complacently.

On either side of these parlours opened four rooms, panelled in oak. Curious to notice how the wainscoting of these was patched in places with old carved overmantels—most likely remains of the former home which had been burnt down in the great Nantwich fire. Before leaving we paused outside to decipher a pious warning underneath one lattice—

"The roote of Wysedom is to fear God,
And the branch thereof shall, too, endure."



OLD HOUSES IN THE HIGH STREET.

draper's shop below, is well worth a visit. And whether American or British born—if so be that you are a true lover of old English architecture—good Miss Lovatt is most likely to say, with old-world courtesy, "Brother will show you upstairs."

Then you shall see old floors bent to the slant of a ship's deck in a storm; rooms panelled in fine-grained oak; cupboards in which a man might stand cunningly hidden. As also there is a beautiful ceiling, embossed with flowers and crossed by heavy beams, which apparently once belonged to one noble upper parlour, though this was later divided. You will see how our ancestors lived in country towns. Better still—a lesson may be unconsciously taught by the gentle old man, who, a true antiquary, cherishes the venerable house he bought some years ago with reverence for its mute associations and pride in the honest work that has lasted so long and well.

"And now sister must show you her birthday

A few steps further are almshouses, remarkable chiefly because of the garb which the aged men are enjoined, by the founder's will, to wear on feast-days and Sundays. Their long grey coats are scarlet-faced, and their queer, high, grey hats are likewise bound with red cloth.

Herewith ends my sketch of the town. So let us wend homeward, and in the lane a good-humoured Cheshire man will at this hour be temptingly holding a gate open to coax his cows home.

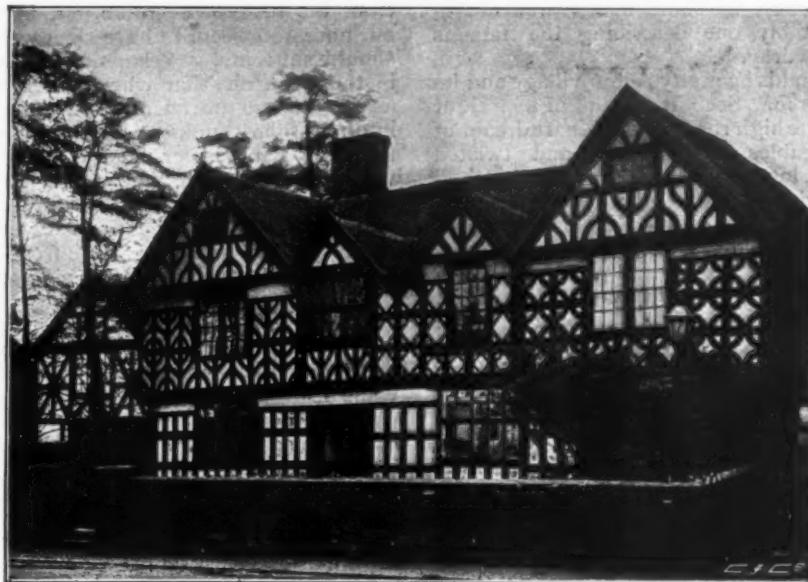
"Come up, Bacchus!" he cries. And proudly this strangely-named wine-god cow marches first. "And now, Martha! And Mary Jane! Oh, ye bad one!" For Mary Jane is sulking, and, though she deigns to answer the call, takes care to prove she is of no slavish mind.

As we enter again the grounds of our pleasant

Nantwich is also what Yankees call a good "jumping-off place for sight-seeing."

Happy those people who have yet to enjoy seeing Chester for the first time—that is, if they have minds tuned to admire the homely picturesqueness of an English town, teeming with memories of Romans and Danes, Saxons and Normans, not to dwell on later Middle Ages. A red-letter day may also be spent in fair Shrewsbury, with its splendid abbey by the silver Severn, its fitly-named Pride Hill, and beautiful black and white houses, in one of which slept King Henry VII before he went to Bosworth.

Or would you mount the merry wheel? Then along level and withal pleasant roads lie many old churches and villages well worth the seeing. Take Worleston, only a row of small houses



CHURCH'S MANSION.

country "guest-house," one uncommon feature deserves a word. Yonder, beyond the trim lawn a wood-path leads to an old, perfectly round garden, walled in cherry bricks, and ringed by as delightful a herbaceous walk and encircling hedge as any thinker would love to seek. For the helpfulness to thought of being, so to say, pent within agreeable bounds, many musing minds have doubtless felt.

In postscript to this account of Nantwich, let it be remembered that Gerard, the famous herbalist, was one of its notables, as also Mrs. Elizabeth Milton, the poet's third wife, and daughter of one Minshull, farmer, of Wistaston, which lies a mile or so across the fields from here. She ended her long widowhood in the town, leaving, among other items in her will, "a totershell knife and fork, twad cloaths, 2 pair cloggs, 1 mask and fan."

precisely alike, cheap commonplaces in brick. But these are transformed into flowering bowers, studies in yellows and orange, that call forth an exclamation of delight, so embowered are they with canariensis, nasturtiums, and musk, mantling the walls and hedging the gardens. It is a model of what village skill can do—urged by prizes from the great house near.

Also it is well worth a long drive through a land of plenty to reach a wooded ridge of hill, rising with surprising suddenness from the flat pastures. Here, on a tree-crowned height, Lord Tollemache's new red sandstone castle of Peckforton is so striking an object that in artistic gratitude one forbears to scoff at a mansion being built in our nineteenth century apparently for defence against arrows and spears. Opposite, a line of ruins on a cliff almost impreg-

nable, in bygone warfare, alone show where once stood the famous Beeston castle, vainly besieged for two years during the civil war, and only surprised by treachery. Its ruined walls and wards still speak silently to those who love to call up bygone days. Then note its only path steeply curving from the old outer ward gate at the foot of the hill to the castle gate high above—a lane cut through walls of living rock! How many mailed men-at-arms, gay hawking cavalades, fierce rushes of soldiery have trod its rough stones.

But most interesting of all dwellings, new or old, around Nantwich, is Dorfold Hall, a delightful specimen of a Jacobean gentleman's country home. Dorfold belongs to Mr. H. Tollemache, but it was kindly shown me by his sister and her husband, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Roundell, who are the present occupiers; the latter a lady who has pleased her fellow-beings by some books well worth reading, notably one describing the famous house of Cowdray.

Dorfold stands by pretty Acton village and its Norman church. Seen at the end of a straight drive from the high road, it is a Stuart dream of projecting gables, steep roofs, and twisted chimneys; a lovely old lady of a house, attired in cherry bricks, diapered in dark blue ones, stretching out two wings, like embracing arms, as pleasingly varied as herself, wherein the sons of the house used to live. A pear-tree, which legend declares to be as old as the mansion, shadows one wing-gable; and over the porch is the date, 1616. Look at the quaint squirrel heads on the rain-pipes; they have been described in one of Miss Broughton's novels, for that lady is sometimes a guest here. Then come indoors, for not often can we view a country house in which for nigh three centuries treasures have been stored by its inmates.

The house has most likely been altered, for one enters into a passage which seems to have been taken off the inner living-hall, where hang noble Gainsboroughs and stable scenes by Morland. The staircase is curiously unobtrusive, heavily built in oak, and hung with panels of gorgeously coloured and embossed horse-hide leather. Overhead, the drawing-room and dining-room are indeed good to see. The former, filling the whole width of the house, looks from its deeply embayed windows both down the drive in front and over the pleasure ground and park behind, with green meads and woods beyond in fair background.

Houses, like beings, have their crises of existence; or, as in music, their keynotes. That of Dorfold was the expected visit of King Jamie. He was coming—and to a loyal subject; so needs must the whole dwelling be ordered and adorned to seem his own house whilst he should honour it. Therefore, were Italian workmen busied for weeks beforehand

covering the curved ceiling of the withdrawing-room with embossed panels, displaying the Tudor rose in various designs, besides the thistle of Scotland. Over the chimneypiece in compliment to Lord Burleigh and Sir Christopher Hatton are their coats of arms.

A recessed window looks down at the back on a small Elizabethan garden, in which two E's, interlaced, are cut out in flower-beds, with paths of coloured stones between. Two steps and a kind of carved porch within the apartment introduce one to the dining-room, of which the panelling is so beautifully grained one might imagine landscapes in the varied brown tints of the wood. This room was designed as the royal bedroom; in witness whereof a white shield bearing the arms of England rises from mantelpiece to ceiling. A square recess would have been the closet for the king's bed; very stuffy if partitioned from the rest of the room, but in those days our ancestors seem to have slept well where we should suffocate. Perhaps they were so much in the open air that when asleep their lungs asked the less nutriment, like sailors nowadays in often stifling bunks. After all these preparations, the King never came at all. For some whim he preferred to "lie" at the Wilbrahams' town house in Nantwich, and even nowadays one feels sore at the untrustworthiness of princes, of which he thus gave fresh proof.

Other "fair chambers," wainscoted and garnished with ancient furniture, were likewise to be seen. These were hung with many exquisitely worked pictures of shepherdesses, some with the faces painted in by Bartolozzi; while in another, setting forth the history of Genesis, Cain is attired in doublet and hose, besides a ruff worked in the daintiest of point-lace stitch. Lastly, a sampler so finely embroidered, it made weak eyes ache to examine it, bore the inscription, "Jane Hart is my name. At ten years old I wrought the same." Poor little Jane! Did she preserve her eyesight, one wonders, and live to tell of her good childhood to degenerate grandchildren?

These closing lines forbid more than the passing mention of a "Cheshire acre"—i.e. two English acres and a half—walled into an old-fashioned kitchen garden with herbaceous walks; of pleasure-grounds worthy the house; and of, perhaps, the finest Spanish chestnut in England.

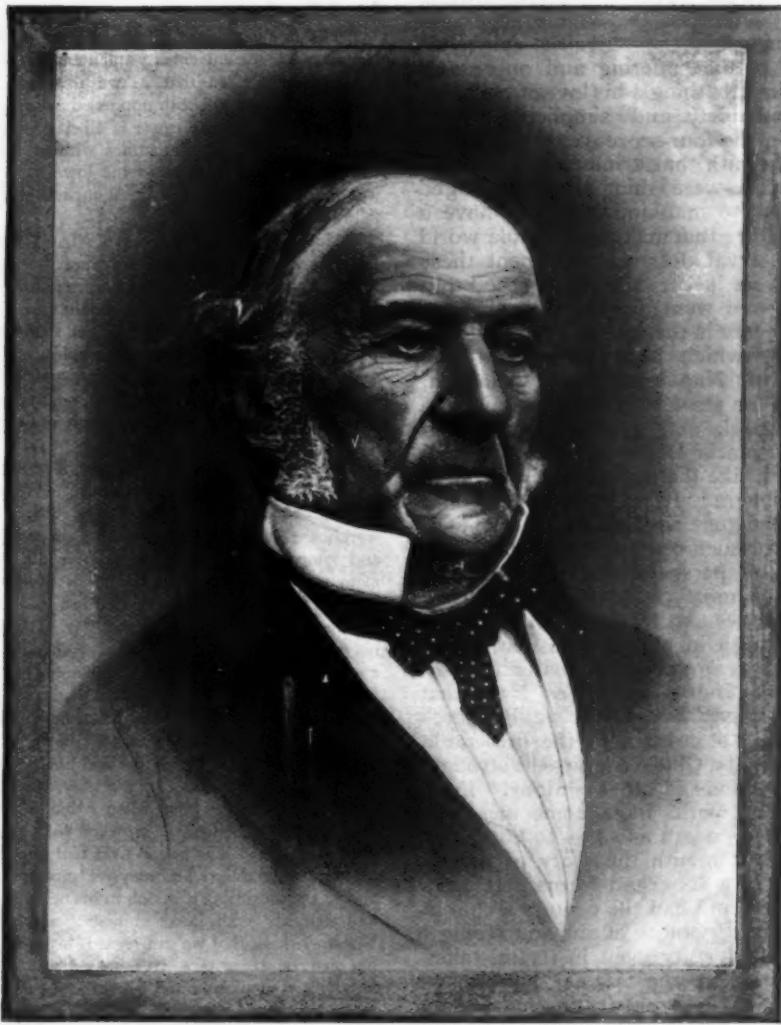
After my first visit, I said in parting to my hosts—and first impressions are the truest:

"I have seen several larger Elizabethan houses; but Dorfold is the most harmonious house I have ever seen." It was pleasing to hear that harmonious had been the very expression also used by the late Lord Leighton, when likewise admiring this old hall.

With which I take my leave of Nantwich and its neighbourhood.

MAY CROMMELIN.

A NATION'S TRIBUTE.



From a photograph by Lyddell Sawyer, Regent Street, W.
(taken in 1881).

THE closing days of May will have their place in history. They saw not only the passing of a king of men, but the homage of a nation rendered as to its greatest son. No one ever divided opinions more sharply than Gladstone in life; yet now in death a unanimous judgment ranks him first among the men of our time. There was a period when the storm of opposition he aroused broke into a passion almost of hate, and no words were too bitter, no calumnies too mean to apply to him; yet no statesman was ever carried to his grave with wider acclaim of admiration and affection. The

Faithfully yours
W. Gladstone

spectacle has been unique and impressive beyond all ordinary record. It is the more striking when we remember that the project to which he had given the surprising energies of his last years was defeated, and that those who were his opponents are still in possession of the field. The generous sentiment, conspicuous in

English public life, which sees only the virtues and honourable achievements of the dead, does not suffice to account for the general feeling. It was the splendid Manhood of Gladstone, the essential human qualities, that were the spring of all—before which the men of all parties and creeds finally bowed. The pre-eminent powers, the ceaseless activities, the infinite courage, the large knowledge, the chivalric spirit, his championship of the suffering and oppressed, his greatness in little things, his love of children, the peace and piety and simplicity of the Hawarden life, the four-score years and eight crowned with a faith that triumphed over pain and death—these were things that belonged not to party, but to mankind, and they have a touch of the nature that makes the whole world kin. In the interval after his retirement these things only were seen, and they stood out grandly as his sun went down. Greater than great achievements is the soul that achieves.

The century which began with Pitt and Metternich, with Napoleon and Wellington, has not lacked for strong men. Our own age has seen Bismarck and Moltke, Cavour and Mazzini, and Francis Deák and Abraham Lincoln and others, like the makers of India, each great in his sphere. It were rash, therefore, to speak of Gladstone as “the greatest man of the century,” for such comparison would imply a knowledge of perspective and proportion greater than the most of us possess. But to this life of service, so long, so full of great endeavour, so high in purpose, so fearless, so intent on the greater good of the greater number, where shall we find a parallel? Now that Gladstone has passed from the scene, Bismarck remains the only statesman of the first rank. Of these two giants, Gladstone has the stronger hold on the affections of other nations. From all parts of the world have come messages which speak of his death as a loss to humanity.

Within the last month the story of the life has been told in a thousand forms. It grew with the century, and had the century's characteristics of change, nobility of aim and strength of will giving it a unity even in its mistakes. Instead of repeating the familiar history, we gather a few of the fragrant testimonies of the hour, and leave them on our page as a tribute to his memory.

Lord Salisbury in the House of Lords.

“Men recognised in him a man guided—whether under mistaken impressions or not—in all the steps he took, in all the efforts he made, by a high moral ideal. What he sought was the attainment of great ideals, and whether they were based on sound convictions or not, they could have issued from nothing but the greatest and the purest moral aspirations, and he is honoured by his countrymen because, through so many years, across so many vicissitudes and conflicts, they recognised the one characteristic of his action which never left him. He will leave behind him, especially to those who have followed with deep interest the history of the later years—I might almost say the later months of his life—the memory of a great Christian statesman. Set up necessarily on high, the sight of his character, his motive, and his intentions would strike all the world; they will have

left a deep and most salutary influence on the political thought and social thought of the generation in which he lived, and he will be long remembered, not so much for the causes in which he was engaged, or the political projects which he favoured, but as a great example, to which history hardly furnishes a parallel, of a great Christian man.”

Lord Rosebery.

“The first and most obvious feature of Mr. Gladstone's character was the universality and humanity of his sympathies. I do not now mean that, as we all know, he sympathised with great causes and with oppressed nations, and with what he believed to be the cause of liberty all over the world, but I do mean his sympathies with all classes of human beings, from the highest to the lowest. That, I believe, was one of the secrets of his most unparalleled power over his fellow-men.

“May I give two instances of what I mean? The first time he visited Midlothian we were driving away from, I think, his first meeting, and we were followed by a shouting crowd as long as their strength would permit; but there was one man who held on much longer than any of them, and who ran, I should think, for two miles. He evidently had some word he was anxious to say, and when he dropped away we listened for what it might be, and it was this: ‘I wish to thank you, sir, for the speech you made to the workhouse people.’ I dare say not many of your lordships recollect that speech; for my purpose it does not politically matter what its terms may have been. We should think it, however, an almost overwhelming task to speak to any workhouse audience and to administer words of consolation and sympathy to a mass who, after all, represent in the main exhaustion and failure and destitution. That is the lowest class. Let me take another instance, from the highest. I believe that the last note that Mr. Gladstone wrote with his own hand was written to Lady Salisbury, to ask her after a carriage accident in which the noble marquis had been involved. It was highly characteristic of the man that in the hour of his sore distress, when he could hardly put pen to paper, he should have written that note of sympathy to the wife of his most prominent and not the least generous of his political opponents. . . . Surely, this should not be an occasion entirely for grief, when a life prolonged to such a limit, so full of honour, so crowned with glory, has come to its termination. The nation lives that produced him. The nation that produced him may yet produce others like him; and in the meantime it is rich in his memory, rich in his life, and rich, above all, in his animating and inspiring example. Nor do I think that we can regard this example as limited to our own country or race. It is shared, and is the possession of all civilised mankind; and generations still to come, through many long years, will look for encouragement in labour, for fortitude in adversity, for the example of a splendid Christianity, with constant hope and constant encouragement, to the pure, splendid, and dauntless figure of William Ewart Gladstone.”

Mr. Balfour in the House of Commons.

“It is the language of sober and of unexaggerated truth to say that there is no gift which would enable a man to move, to influence, to adorn an assembly like this that Mr. Gladstone did not possess in a supereminent degree. Debaters as ready there may have been, orators as finished. It may have been given to others to sway as skilfully this assembly, or to appeal with as much directness and force to the simpler instincts of great masses in the country; but it has been given to no man to combine all these great gifts as they were combined in the person of Mr. Gladstone. From the conversational discussion appropriate to our work in Committees to the most sustained eloquence befitting some great argument and some great historic occasion, every

weapon of Parliamentary warfare was wielded by him with the sureness and ease of a perfect, absolute, and complete mastery. . . . Let no man hope to be able to reconstruct from our records any living likeness of these great works of genius [his speeches]. The words, indeed, are there, lying side by side with the words of lesser men in an equality as if of death; but the spirit, the fire, the inspiration are gone. And he who could alone revive, he who could alone show us what these works really were, or reproduce them for us, has now been taken away. Posterity must take it on our testimony what he was to those friends or foes whose fortune it was to hear him. We who thus heard him know that though our days be prolonged, and though it may be our fortune to see the dawn or even the meridian of other men destined to illuminate this House and to do great and glorious service to their Sovereign and their country, we shall never again see anybody, never again in this assembly see any man, who can reproduce for us what Mr. Gladstone was—who can show to those who never heard him how much they have lost. One service he did—in my opinion incalculable. He added a dignity and he added a weight to the deliberations of this House by his genius which I think it is impossible adequately to express. It is not enough, in my opinion, for us to keep up simply a level, though it be a high level, of probity and of patriotism. The mere virtue of civic honesty is not sufficient to preserve this assembly from the fate which has overcome so many other assemblies, the products of democratic forces. More than this is required, more than this was given to us by Mr. Gladstone."

Sir W. Vernon Harcourt.

"No one will ever forget the stately dignity, the old-world courtesy, which he ever extended to foes and to friends alike. His conduct of the House of Commons, whether in the Government or in Opposition, bore all the marks of a lofty spirit. He respected others as he respected himself, and he controlled both by his magnanimity. He was strong, and he was also gentle, and he was to us not only a great statesman, but a great gentleman. We felt that he exalted the spirit of the assembly in which he was the undisputed chief; and we felt that the House of Commons was greater by his presence, as it is greater by his memory. What he did for this House he did for the nation too. I think it is impossible to over-value the influence which the purity and the piety of his public and his private life have had upon the life of this country . . .

"Of all chiefs he was the least exacting, the most kind, the most tolerant, and the most placable. How seldom in this House was the voice of personal anger heard from his lips! These are true marks of greatness. I read the other day in the 'Life of Pitt' by a man who knew him from youth upwards, and was the intimate friend of his private life, words which I will ask leave to read, but they are as true of Mr. Gladstone as they are of Pitt: 'He assumed no superiority in conversation, nor ever oppressed any man with the strength of his talents or the brilliancy of his wit. It was a matter of surprise how so much fire could be mitigated, yet not enfeebled, by so much gentleness, and how so much power could be so delightful. But modesty was a striking feature of his character. He was attentive to the humblest, and kindly and patient to the weakest. No man was more beloved by his friends, or more inspired those who had the happiness to live in his society.' Such was the great man whom we shall see to the grave amidst the mourning of a grateful people."

Mr. Dillon.

"Mr. Gladstone was the greatest Englishman of his time. He loved his own people as much as any Englishman that ever lived. But through communion with the hearts of his

own people, he acquired that wider and greater gift—the power of understanding and sympathising with other peoples. He entered into their sorrows and felt for their oppressions. With splendid courage he did not hesitate, even in the case of his much-loved England, to condemn her when he thought she was wronging others. And in so doing he fearlessly faced odium and unpopularity amongst his own people which it must have been bitter for him to bear. And so he became something far greater than a British statesman, and took a place amongst the great leaders of the human race. Amidst the obstructions and the cynicism of a materialistic age, he never lost his hold on the 'ideal.' And so it came to pass that wherever throughout the civilised world a race or nation of men were suffering from oppression, their thoughts turned towards Gladstone; and when that mighty voice was raised in their behalf, Europe and the civilised world listened, and the breathing of new hopes entered into the hearts of men made desperate by long despair."

At Hawarden Church.

The Dean of Lincoln, Mr. Gladstone's son-in-law.

"We have known that we had amongst us one of the greatest of living men—greatest in heart, and capacities, and achievements. Hundreds of thousands of our fellow-countrymen have envied us the daily sight of him as the scholar and orator, as the statesman who was in office before the Queen's great sixty years began, as the indomitable fighter for what he saw, or seemed to see, to be right, as the champion to whom the oppressed in every clime and race turned intuitively. He has been known and reverenced all over the world; but we saw another side of him. For nearly sixty years he has been well known here; for nearly fifty he has gone in and out daily among you. He has mixed in the life of the place which he loved so dearly. His best was at your service. You have seen him as a prophet is seen in his own country. You have seen his home life, his simple tastes, his laborious days, his kindness, and old-world courtesy; you have seen how he loved this church and its services. There is the door in the park with his initials on it, and the significant date of 1853, which commemorates the fact that within a few months of coming here to live he made, partly with his own hands, the beautiful path by which from that day forward for more than forty years, till his strength began to give, he hardly failed, summer or winter, wet or fine, to walk up before breakfast for the daily morning prayers. You have seen him in church on weekdays and Sundays, his devout attitude, his eager attention. You have heard his expressive and sweet reading of the Lessons. As he grew less quick of hearing you have seen him move from his seat to the front of the pulpit to listen to the sermon—the most generous and indulgent of listeners, always noting the good, not the worst points, always ready with a defence of a sermon if it was adversely criticised. You knew of his quiet Sundays; whether he was here or in London, the regular church-going, morning and evening, the change of books and talk, the cessation of ordinary work unless under urgent pressure of official duty. It was one of the secrets of his marvellous elasticity of mind under the weight of public care, and it was a witness to his never-failing sense of the spiritual and eternal world, and of the true proportion of things—all was of a piece. It was not a religion for the eye of others, nor one of moods and occasions; nor one resorted to as earthly things began to slip from his grasp. If he had a scorn for anything religious it was for a nerveless and formless religion which does not know its own mind; and yet who was more large-hearted, more able to see what was good in those who differed from him? Even on the most vital questions he took everyone to be as conscientious as himself, and he had a profound reverence for conscience in everyone."

At Buckley Church.

The Rev. Harry Drew, Mr. Gladstone's son-in-law, resident under his roof.

"The greatest man of modern times was, above all else, a most sincere and devoted Christian. In his physical distress he desired to die at peace and in good will with all, and no man could have had that desire more richly or more ungrudgingly fulfilled. It was a joy to his family to know how deeply he was loved. How thankful he was for the kindness and love showered upon him by the world. He received it, too, with such touching humility. He was so surprised, as though he did not deserve it. He was so profoundly impressed by it that the words were often on his lips, 'Kindness, kindness everywhere; nothing but kindness.' For weeks before the end he might be said to have shed his life, and to have given himself up entirely to the contemplation of Divine things. He was as though living above in a higher, purer atmosphere, and only now and then recalled here by the voice of those who were ministering to him. Only a few days ago, when asked if he had any pain, he said: 'No; I am quite comfortable; I am only waiting, only waiting.' Last Sunday, early in the morning, when asked if he felt comfortable, he said: 'Yes, very comfortable, only the end is long coming. Pray for me and for all our fellow-Christians and all our fellow-creatures; and do not forget all who are oppressed, unhappy, and downtrodden.'"

At Seaforth.

The Rev. R. F. Smithwick.

In St. Thomas's Church, Seaforth, near Liverpool, which was built by Sir John Gladstone, his father, is the pew in which Mr. Gladstone sat as a boy, indicated by an inscription. Here he was in early days a Sunday school teacher. The vicar, Mr. Smithwick, in preaching there gave some reminiscences.

"Great as Mr. Gladstone was in the House of Commons and on the platform, his home life was if possible even more fascinating. It would be presumption to speak of the beautiful devotion of one who for nearly sixty years was his helpmate; but no one could enter that home without being struck by it. Mr. Gladstone was never more in his element than when surrounded by his books. The first time I saw him in the 'Temple of Peace' he was standing on a ladder among his precious volumes. Looking down upon me he said, 'These are the friends we never tire of,' and he proceeded to talk of Wordsworth, Keats, and Tennyson. Another trait was his love for little children. To see him with a grandchild on his knee, doing the child's bidding, drawing a house on the back of an envelope, and then being told in a decided way to draw another, was a sight not easily forgotten, because it showed how this great man, who was head and shoulders above his fellows, could put aside his greatness and throw all his interest into the amusements of a little child."

At Oxford.

The Regius Professor of Divinity.

"One of his contemporaries at Oxford, Charles Wordsworth, said of him that no man of his standing habitually read his Bible more or knew it better—a reverent and systematic student of the Bible he had remained to his life's end. Yet the theological student, both friend and foe knew well, was also the religious man. A blameless life, rejoicing in all the sanctities of home affections and duties, illustrated his faith. Without hypocrisy, without sanctimoniousness, alike in public and in private, he had not been ashamed to confess the faith of Christ."

At St. Paul's Cathedral.

The Archbishop of Canterbury.

"There are three great qualifications for a man to lead his fellows. He must have a sympathetic heart, the insight of genius, and that strong intensity of purpose which will hold its way in spite of obstacles. He whom we mourn had all three in greater measure than most other men. He was so sympathetic that no oppression, no injustice, wherever it was practised, failed to touch his soul with burning indignation.

"If any were downtrodden, if anywhere on the world's surface injustice was ruling, he was the one whose soul was thrilled by the thought, and he was ready to spend and be spent in whatever was needed to remedy such dreadful wrong. It was not his own country only that thus stirred his heart—in all the world he still had the same thrill of deep-rooted sympathy with those who were wrongly used, and everywhere his soul was stirred to fire if he heard that man was oppressing man, that man was unjust to man. . . . The sympathy he felt for foreign nations was not wanting in his intercourse with individuals, and, putting all these things together, they were gifts that greatly helped all else which his conscience bid him do. But there is one thing which stands above the rest, which marks him especially as one of the witnesses to the Faith, and that is, that in the use of all his gifts there was ever the high purpose, the determination, to the utmost of his knowledge and his power, to obey the law of God. Never did he utter anything which was not inspired by a high moral principle, never did he act on any low or selfish grounds, never did he lower himself to think about himself and not about those for whom he was labouring. He raised political life altogether to a higher level. . . . He changed his views in many ways as he went on, and yet through every change, whatever it might be, there still stood that steady beholding of high principle in walks of life where sometimes high principle was derided as unpractical and foolish. To the end of his life he always maintained that supreme above all politics that could be thought of the moral law must be the governing rule; and now that he has gone we thank God that he has been sent amongst us."

At Aberdeen.

Mr. James Bryce.

"His courage was splendid and unfailing. Of him we may say as the Regent Morton said of John Knox, 'Here lies one who never feared the face of man.' He was sometimes impetuous, especially in debate; he was usually cautious and wary, but whether impetuous or wary, he was always brave. No one ever saw him dismayed by any danger or afraid to face any hostile odds. The difficulty of an enterprise seemed rather to stimulate him to put forth his utmost force to achieve his purpose. Neither was he ever haunted by any of those fears for his own reputation, any of those anxieties as to possible misconstruction of his actions which affright ordinary men. His own lofty spirit was to him a sufficient source of strength. His love of freedom grew with his growth. I have often heard him say, and I think he has somewhere written it, that in his earlier life he had not sufficiently appreciated the value and the power of liberty, and it was remarkable that advancing years, which make most of us take less sanguine views of politics and dispose us to dwell upon the needs for checks and safeguards, never dulled the edge of his hopefulness or diminished the faith he had in the capacity of freedom and self-government to elevate a nation and to promote its welfare. This faith in freedom was part of his faith in human nature, and that again was part of his faith in God, whose providential government of the world was directly, constantly, and vividly realised by him as it is by few."

The splendour and the pathos of the burial in Westminster Abbey were an embodiment of the national sentiment visible to all the world. When events have resumed their march, and

the lustre of the personality is dimmed by the crowd of passing years, an impartial future will hold the records of this great career as part of the inspiring heritage of history.

Gladstone.

I.

WHAT! was it yesterday he trod the earth,
Talking and eating—he that from afar
Shineth upon our gloom, a name, a star,
An awful glory?—once in party's girth—
A brand, a war-cry—now he holds the worth
Of those calm splendours naught can bound
or mar:
One of the dead undying ones that are
Mankind's, and the proud world doth claim
their birth.

Alas for eyes that see and not discern!
Is it the judgment of recording fate
Our petty spites must fret and desecrate
The living hero, while we surely turn
Beside his coffin'd face with hearts that
yearn,
And cry together, "Ah! this man was
great!"

II.

Scarcely our need had granted thee discharge
From the loud fields whereon thy deeds
were done
Than the dark sculpture of the setting sun
Carved thee in marble, set thee sole and large.
'Twas hard to hold thee on the hither marge
Of flesh-bound greatness: thou so long
hadst spun
Thy robe eternal, half we deem'd thee one
Passed in the flaming car, the sable barge.

Thou lamp of England! many a starry fame,
Bridging with Heaven our hoarse and sullen
sea,
Shall burn around thee, each an epic name,
An age's print and seal: yet sure decree
Of Time's long thoughts makes thine the
sovereign flame:—
We voice our noblest century, naming thee.

III.

Most surely I believe shall dawn a time
When we who look'd on Gladstone's mighty face
And heard his mastering voice shall gain such grace
As elders who, in Israel's marvellous prime,
Beholding him who the fierce mount did climb,
Won from the huckstering flour-fed later race:
Strong men round either stood; yet none had place
Beside the leader, sole, remote, sublime.

No more in party coins his work we count.
England and manhood claim him. Yea, his rod
Out of the stony rock did call a fount,
And his firm march was toward the promised sod:
Moreover, this man stood upon the mount,
And his great gaze had fire and light from God.

FREDERICK LANGBRIDGE.



Over-Sea Notes.

The Dis-
covers of
America.

Florence, once called by a Pope "the fifth element," has been celebrating the centenary of two of her most eminent sons, *Vespucci* and *Toscanelli*—the former a name well known to English ears, in conjunction with that of Bartholomew Diaz and others; the other, though perhaps equally deserving, less so.

Great was the enthusiasm raised amongst all classes by this Centennial.



AMERIGO VESPUCCI AT THE AGE OF 19.

From the recently discovered fresco in the Church of Ogni Santi (All Saints) by Domenico Ghirlandajo.

AMERIGO VESPUCCI, called after St. Emeric, a Hungarian saint of the eleventh century (son of Stephen, King of Hungary), lived from 1451 to 1512, and was the third son of Anastasio, a distinguished lawyer in the employ of the Government.

He studied under the tuition of an uncle, became proficient in mathematics and astronomy, went to France as secretary to the Florentine Ambassador there, and, after a brief visit to his own country again, for unknown reasons took service in the great mercantile house of the Medici, whose galleys were familiar

to all the European ports. In 1490 Amerigo betook himself to Cadiz on business, and completely innocent of all attempt to forestall Columbus. He, on the contrary, was, by his own assertion, first urged by the example of the courageous Genoese to undertake further explorations, guided by the same ingenious geographical charts and computations which had served so well his intrepid predecessor. Being in Seville at the time of Columbus' second departure, he was induced to resign his position as head of a large banking firm, and with three small sailing vessels granted by King Ferdinand he set sail, it is said, in the year 1497.

The story so oft related of his unsuccessful solicitations of the Florentine Government would not seem, therefore, to have much foundation; indeed, it is hardly likely that after the banishment of the Medici, and the consequent unsettled state of public affairs, Vespucci, after so long an absence from home, should broach the subject in Florence.

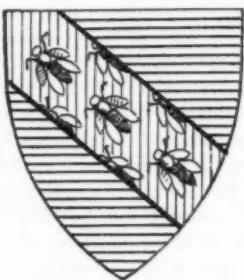
On this first expedition he touched the mainland, to which he gave the name of Venezuela, *Little Venice*, from the houses being built on stakes planted in the water, after the manner of the Venetian lagoons. Another voyage with the Admiral Hojeda resulted in skirting a great stretch of the coast. On the discovery of islands in the Gulf of Mexico on his third voyage, not only was he received on his return with great honours by the King and Queen at Castile, but the Florentine Signoria, proud of their fellow-citizen, caused his house in the Borgognissanti to be illuminated for three successive nights by the *lumiere* (chandeliers of state), a rare favour even amongst the nobles.

In 1501 and 1503 Vespucci undertook two other voyages under the patronage of Emanuel of Portugal, and afterwards returned to the service of his former employer, the King of Spain, making known to the Old World almost the whole extent of the eastern coast of South America, including the Bay of Paria, and the district of Cumana. So that whilst Columbus may rightly be called the pioneer of explorers in these regions, and was indeed the first to sight the islands off the mainland—he himself poured contempt and ridicule on the idea of a new continent—Amerigo was undoubtedly the first to cross the equator, and may appropriately be termed the Discoverer of the *Continent*, no predecessor having traversed South America to so vast an extent.

The circumstances of Vespucci's death cannot be precisely determined; by many he is supposed to

have died at Seville, by others to have perished at sea, the Terier islands concealing his grave.

It is a pleasant task to rescue the memory of the great from oblivion, and a pleasanter still to vindicate their name from calumny. An ugly cobweb has till lately hung persistently about Vespucci, obscuring his finely chiselled features. French and Spanish historians have soiled his fair fame with many a foul epithet, and even Washington Irving seems to think that by imposing his name on the new continent he robbed



Vespa : a wasp.

COAT OF ARMS OF THE VESPUCCI FAMILY.

Columbus of his due. After due research, however, Humboldt, Peschel, Vernhagen and others rose to his defence, and exonerated Vespucci from any such imputation, proving, from trustworthy documents and private letters, that at the time when his name was given to the new territory he was away on an ocean voyage, and not even privy to it.

We probably owe the name of America to a German professor at Freiburg in Bresgau, Waldseemüller by name, who, in an appendix to a pamphlet written by him in 1507 on the travels of Vespucci, proposed to call the West Indian Islands AMERICA, "ab Americo inventore."

It is interesting also to remark that Columbus himself, far from entertaining any feelings of unworthy jealousy with regard to his supposed rival, speaks highly of him, and, in a letter to his son Diego, calls

*amerigo
vespucio*

him "a most worthy man, and one who has always endeavoured to do me pleasure" (*un uomo dabbene, e che sempre ha cercato di farmi piacere*), even encouraging his son to appeal to Amerigo for help and counsel.

After the fashion of the men of that luxuriantly intellectual period, of one of whom it was said that he possessed four souls—Michael Angelo, *l'homme à quatre âmes*—Vespucci not only dedicated himself to science, commerce and navigation, but also was no mean writer. A manuscript of his is to be found in the Riccardian library at Florence, in the neatest and most legible of handwritings.

A feature which has added increased lustre and interest to the centenary celebrations has been the very recent discovery of a long-lost fresco by Domenico Ghirlandajo, containing valuable portraits (Vasari) of the Vespucci family.

A few weeks previous to the anniversary, during the renovations in All Saints' Church, which, with the adjoining hospital, was under the special patronage of the Vespucci—Simone Vespucci, Amerigo's grandfather, being a very pious and charitable person—an oil painting was removed from the wall over a side altar, and this opportune *Pietà* was exposed to view, considerably damaged by time, but fortunately well preserved as regards the principal figures.

A very youthful Virgin, her outstretched mantle of mercy supported by, alas! bleared angels at the two corners, extends her hands in blessing over a group of kneeling men on the right and women on the left. The former include four representatives of the Vespucci family, among whom is young Amerigo, at the age of nineteen, a wide-open, straightforward countenance, broad brow, and fearless expression.



AMERIGO VESPUCCI AND PAOLO TOSCANELLI.
From a picture in the Pitti Palace by Cecconi.

PAOLO TOSCANELLI, surnamed *del Pozzo* (of the well) with that delight in sobriquets which characterised those times—instance Andrea *del Sarto*, *il Beato Angelico*, Paolo *Veronese*, and others—from the trifling circumstance of his having lived close by a famous public well, still in existence, and hence a prominent feature of the armorial bearings of the Toscanelli family, was born at Florence in 1398, and from the first was devoted to astronomical observa-

tions and scientific research. A friend of Marsilio Ficino, Lorenzo's darling, of Arnolfo and Brunelleschi, the great architects, it was in the Cathedral of Santa Maria del Fiore, built by the latter, that in 1468 he placed his wonderful invention for noting the Summer Solstice and determining the poise of the building, a dial which gave rise to all the later sun-dials and meridians.¹

But his chief glory lies in the letter, dated June 25, 1474, which he wrote to Columbus, a copy of the one addressed to Alphonso V, in which he expressed a strong conviction of the existence of inhabited tracts of land at the Antipodes, and to which he added a geographical chart, indicating the probable position of the Indies. He was thus the *initiator* of the great discovery, the *inspirer* and *guide* of the great navigators, the first whose genius conceived, and not at random, but as the result of careful, earnest calculation, and confidently affirmed, the existence of the unknown and unseen.

He died in 1482, and was buried in the church of Santo Spirito, where a tablet already recorded the services of his father, Pietro Toscanelli, the great physician.

Although his be a somewhat repellent cast of face, austere, and rendered still more striking by the marked aquiline nose and heavy lips, it is good to be able to record of him that, living in an epoch as degradedly corrupt as it was intellectually brilliant—that of the Medici princes—Toscanelli was not more noted for mental capacity than for a singular purity of life and kindness of manner; so much so that his beatification as a saint has on several occasions been suggested.

The Russian Nobility. Since the time of Alexander III's accession, the condition of the nobles of the empire has been a source of much concern to the Government of Russia, and the present Tsar has now appointed a commission of leading men to enquire into the causes of their backward state, their ignorance, and the gradually decreasing value of their landed possessions. They are an improvident class, and have never recovered from the blow struck at their supremacy by the liberation of the serfs. There is nothing in Western Europe resembling the class of Russian nobles. Very few families remain with the old noble blood of the famous *boyars*; but in Peter the Great's time a new class of "service" and "personal" nobles was created which has gone on increasing with extraordinary speed. So great was the increase that Alexander I created two orders, the "hereditary," with the dignity descending from father to son, and the "personal," expiring with the death of the holder of the patent. At the present time only the four highest ranks in the civil, military, and naval services confer hereditary nobility on their holders; the remaining eight ranks are only personal nobles. Every child of a hereditary noble, and not the eldest only, enjoys the title held by his father. In European Russia there are at the present time the incredible

¹ The exactness of this early instrument may be demonstrated from the fact that after the shocks of earthquake of May 28, 1896, on an inspection of the dial, it was discovered that the position of the Cathedral had considerably altered.

number of 600,000 hereditary and 250,000 personal nobles. These are met in all grades of society and in all callings, and not seldom among the very proletariat. Our English notions of an aristocracy are of little use to us in studying the Russian nobility

Jubilee of Professor Berner of Berlin. Professor Albert Friedrich Berner, of the Berlin University, probably the most eminent authority in the world on criminal jurisprudence, has celebrated

the fiftieth anniversary of his activity as a teacher of penal law. Berner, who is over eighty years old, came to Berlin a young man of thirty, when the Hegelian philosophy was flourishing. He was one of the first who freed themselves from the school of Hegel to follow in the footsteps of the new school of French jurists. In addition to his numerous works devoted to his special subject, Berner is the author of a well-known book, "The Oriental Question," an examination of this delicate subject founded on the diplomatic correspondence of the European Governments during the years 1850-1870. Another important work from his pen, entitled "Judaism and Christianity," advocates the union of the two religions. Perhaps his best-known book in lay circles is "The Abolition of Capital Punishment." Berner all his life has been a consistent opponent of the death penalty, and it is from his cogent pages that the abolitionists of capital punishment in England and America have drawn their most powerful arguments. His standard work, "A Handbook of Criminal Jurisprudence," is known throughout legal circles all the world over.

The World's Railway Statistics. A German statistician computes that at the end of 1898 the railways of the world will have a mileage of 479,000 miles: America with 250,000 miles, Europe with 171,000, Asia with 33,000, Australia 15,000, and Africa 10,000. This is 30,000 miles more than in 1892. Among the European States the German Empire has the largest mileage—31,600; France has 27,500 miles, Russia, including Finland, 26,000, Great Britain and Ireland 22,800, and Austria 21,450. The capital invested in the railways of the world reaches the incredible sum of £7,225,000,000. The number of locomotives in constant use is 131,219, and over five million persons find employment from the railway companies of the world.

Literary Activity in Germany. Professor Hickmann, a well-known German statistician, has compiled an interesting table comparing the literary activity of the Fatherland in the years 1856-60 with that of the years 1893-97. In the former period 44,398 new books appeared in Germany; in the latter 110,000. The greatest increase is noticeable in works dealing with building, architecture, and medicine. The number of works on the science of war has increased by 375 per cent, those on trade and commerce, technical and practical, by 350 per cent. Books on art, on law and statecraft also show a marvellous increase. The most modest increase is noticeable in works on theology and history, which have only risen 125 per cent. From occupying the first place in the

former period, theology has now sunk to the second, and school books, which occupied the third place in the former period of time, now occupy the first place. The total number of new books produced in Germany in the forty years 1856-96 is 542,351—figures far exceeding those of any other country in the world.

By the death of the Marquis G. de Cherville has disappeared an ever enthusiastic and ever observing student

A French Naturalist.
of nature, whose worth in France was very much what that of Richard Jefferies was in England. He wrote of woods and fields and their life with the utmost realism—in the better sense of the word—and made common things interesting to those who had never thought of them before, by simply drawing them into view without pretending to teach. As a poetic colourist, however, De Cherville was distinctly inferior to Jefferies, whose glowing imagination gave such an artistic quality to his work. The French

naturalist's knowledge was probably wider and fuller, for his experience was much longer than that of his English contemporary, but although a polished writer he had not the Englishman's originality. Nevertheless his valuable and extensive contributions to the literature of rural life and natural history were not appreciated in France as they deserved to be. The French, although they have a great love of sunshine, green leaves and flowers, and quite a passion for open-air festivities, take but a languid interest in the study of nature. They know far less than the English about common plants and animals, and their general indifference to such matters is the more remarkable because they can claim some of the most celebrated naturalists. M. de Cherville had to write largely upon practical agriculture and gardening in order to reach a sufficient number of readers, but he always contrived to relieve the dryness of technical subjects with charming touches of observation and feeling. He was for many years a regular contributor to the *Temps*.

Science and Discovery.

THE METALS OF ANTIQUITY.

LECTURING recently at the Royal Institution, Dr. J. H. Gladstone traced the use of various metals by the great nations of Egypt, Assyria, Palestine and Greece, in different periods of their history, as shown by the nature of the objects found in ruins of different ages, and by historical records. Gold and copper are the earliest metals of which indications have been found, both being scarce and no doubt costly. Gold was probably the earliest to attract the attention of mankind, because it occurs in a native or elementary form of bright yellow colour, and is easily worked. Copper, however, dates to a similar period—about 4000 B.C.—so far as the remains which have hitherto been discovered are concerned. The oldest metallic objects in the world come from a royal tomb at Nagada, containing the mummy of King Menes, the first King of Egypt, who died about B.C. 4400. Among various articles, including glass and cloth, found in the tomb were a few morsels of gold and a kind of button which, upon analysis, proved to be nearly pure copper. Arsenic was used to harden copper in very early periods, some of the oldest copper implements containing a notable proportion of this metal; and tin was used in combination with copper, producing bronze, as far back as perhaps B.C. 3400. When silver was first used is not very evident, but the metal appears to be mentioned in connection with an Egyptian formularey about B.C. 3600. With regard to the metals in use in Palestine, silver and gold are mentioned among the presents given to Rebekah (B.C. 1860), and directions were given for the use of silver, gold and brass by the Children of Israel in the

construction of the Tabernacle. At the time of the translation of the Bible, however, the word brass was used indiscriminately for copper or any of its alloys. In conclusion, Dr. Gladstone pointed out that lead is mentioned once, but iron appears to have been unknown to the Israelites, the word never occurring in the book of Exodus; and though it is occasionally mentioned in the books of Numbers, Deuteronomy, and Joshua, it is always with reference, not to the Israelites, but to the nations they encountered.

WINDY AND CALM PLACES IN THE BRITISH ISLES.

At the present time of year, when people are beginning to consider where to spend their summer holidays, the wind-chart produced for the Quarterly Journal of the Royal Meteorological Society is of topical interest. The chart was constructed by Mr. F. C. Bayard, from observations of the direction of the wind over the British Isles, made at seventy meteorological stations during a period of four years. The directions from which the winds blow are shown by arrows, and the lengths of the arrows indicate the percentage of direction. The longest arrows thus show the direction from which the largest proportion of winds blow, and the shortest arrows indicate the direction of the smallest proportion of winds. The circles around which the arrows are arranged denote the percentage of calm, a large circle indicating a large proportion of calm weather, while a small circle shows that calms are comparatively rare. The chart illustrates the results of observations throughout the year, and is therefore not an absolutely accurate

representation of the condition of wind and calm in any particular month; nevertheless, a good idea of the average state and direction of wind can be obtained from it. Hastings, for instance, is shown to be a very windy place, and Marlborough a comparatively calm spot, and this is true whether the whole year is considered or only the month of July. The direction and frequency of wind have such an important bearing upon climate and health that the results of Mr. Bayard's examination of the statistics which exist upon the subject are of great interest.

PHOTOGRAPHIC ACTION OF VAPOURS OF METALS.

The curious fact that certain substances give off vapours which have a peculiar penetrative quality, analogous to that of Röntgen rays, has already been described in these columns (1897, p. 742). It appears that a number of metals, alloys, and other substances, such as picture copal, printing-ink, strawboard, etc., are able to act even at a distance upon a sensitive photographic plate, producing effects similar in appearance to, and developed in the same way as, plates which have been acted on by ordinary light. Dr. W. J. Russell, who had made a detailed investigation of this remarkable characteristic, lately communicated some of his new results to the Royal Society. His experiments show conclusively that the effect is not produced by phosphorescence, as was at first supposed, but by vapour emitted by the actinic materials. This vapour can be carried along by a current of air, and it has the power of passing through thin sheets of such bodies as gelatin, celluloid, collodion, etc.; in fact, so transparent are these bodies to the vapour that, even after it has passed through them, it is able to produce clear pictures of the surface of the metal from which it came. A very large number of substances have been found to give off vapours of this strange penetrative character, and Dr. Russell hopes before long to make known some further developments of these curious actions, both of metals and of organic substances. This subject is of such wide importance to photographers that it merits the thorough investigation which Dr. Russell is giving it.

LIQUID HYDROGEN.

Readers of these columns are already familiar with many of the wonderful feats which Professor Dewar has accomplished in the way of liquefying gases on a large scale. But though, through his work, liquid air and liquid fluorine have lately been procurable in any quantity that science has required, liquid hydrogen, the lightest gas, has only been obtained in appreciable amounts during the past month. There is nothing extraordinary or new in the principle of the plan adopted, for the combination of compression with intense cold has long been recognised as the only way in which the change of state from gas to liquid is possible. But the application of a well-known principle is a very different thing from merely understanding it. While, hitherto, the nearest approach to the liquid condition in which hydrogen has been

obtained has been that of a mist-like state in which it existed for a short time only, it can now be procured in sufficient quantities to carefully study it and determine all its physical characters. The plan adopted by Professor Dewar in the laboratory of the Royal Institution was briefly this. Hydrogen was cooled to a temperature of 205° below zero on the centigrade scale—that is, 370° of frost by the Fahrenheit thermometer—being at the same time subjected to a pressure equal to that of 180 atmospheres, or 2,700 lbs. to the square inch, and allowed to escape into a vacuous vessel surrounded by a space the temperature of which was 200° below the centigrade zero. The result was that the hydrogen became liquid. More than a cubic inch of the liquefied gas was collected and on examination it proved to be colourless, transparent, to possess a well-defined meniscus, and apparently to have high refractive powers. Some idea of the degree of cold obtained may be gathered from the fact that a tube closed at the lower end, when immersed in the liquid, was almost at once filled with solid air. Even so great a man as Maxwell had doubts as to the possibility of ever liquefying hydrogen, and up to the present time the behaviour of different forms of matter under degrees of cold approaching the absolute zero of temperature is quite a matter of conjecture. It is because Professor Dewar's experiments provide men of science with a cooling agent which brings them within 20° or 30° of the absolute zero of temperature, and so opens up an entirely new field of scientific enquiry, that such an important place will be assigned to them in the record of the scientific work of the year.

THE BLUE COLOUR OF THE SKY.

Ordinary sunlight, as is well known, is compounded of an infinite number of ethereal waves of different lengths. Some of these waves, within limits which vary for different eyes, are able to affect the retina and to give rise to the sensation of light. Of waves which can thus produce vision the shortest cause the impression which is called violet, and the longest produce a mental image which we speak of as red. But by other means, such as a sensitive photographic plate, we can detect the presence in sunlight of waves shorter even than those designated violet, and it is of these very short waves, of whose existence the unaided eye is ignorant, that physicists speak when they refer to "ultra-violet" waves or rays. From some experiments of Mr. C. T. R. Wilson, which he demonstrated at the recent conversazione of the Royal Society, it would appear that the ultra-violet rays take a very important part in the production of clouds. Mr. Wilson brought the light from an arc lamp to a focus within a vessel containing moist, dust-free air, by means of a quartz lens, which permits ultra-violet rays to pass through it, with the result that a bluish fog gradually developed along the path of the light. When, however, a sheet of glass or mica was interposed in the course of the light, so as to cut off the ultra-violet waves, no cloud or rain resulted, though the air was supersaturated with moisture. It would thus appear as though the

azure vault of heaven, which is so constant and familiar a part of our terrestrial environment, owes its existence to the absorption and scattering of the ultra-violet rays of sunlight by the small particles of water vapour in the upper layers of the atmosphere.

THE NATURE OF GRAVITATION.

The nature of gravitation has from time immemorial occupied the minds of natural philosophers. Now that the interstellar ether is becoming almost as familiar to us as a household word, and its recondite properties are being unravelled, there is some prospect of the ancient problem being solved. Efforts have been made of late to discover whether gravitational force is propagated instantaneously through space. If we could suddenly create or destroy a centre of attraction, as we can a beam of light, the answer would be fairly easy. But as it is, we can only watch whether changes of position among the heavenly bodies produce their proper effect upon other bodies at once or after a measurable lapse of time. So far, no evidence of such a lapse of time has been forthcoming, although the most favoured theories demand it. One of those theories supposes that an infinite number of very small "ultra-mundane" particles is constantly traversing space in all directions. They are partly intercepted by ponderable matter. Hence two bodies will shield each other from the particles on one side, and the bombardment on the outside will drive them together, producing an apparent "attraction" between them. This theory, originally

due to Le Sage, has been further studied by Professors Lodge and Preston. The latter concludes that at a certain great distance gravitational attraction is intercepted altogether. If this is true, Newton's grand conception of universal gravitation will have to be modified, and the visible universe will be held together by beams of light.

THE ANALYSIS OF MUSIC.

The phonograph is by no means the ultimate development of sound-recording instruments. Not only does it still labour under some very decided imperfections, such as a preference for notes of a certain pitch, but it fails to give any direct indication of the pitch of a note recorded. It is one thing to reproduce the full music of an orchestra, but what our inventors will have to consider next is a means of recording each note separately, so that in the end we shall have a "full score" ready made by automatic record. The thing is by no means impossible. It has, in fact, been partly accomplished by the late H. von Helmholtz, the distinguished Prussian man of science. He used a set of "resonators" consisting of brass tuned to certain notes, which only resounded when those particular notes were sung or played. If his resonators had been sufficiently numerous, and their record had been automatic, the object would have been completely attained. But as it is, there is a chance for a younger man to devise a method of analysing music as perfectly as the spectroscope is able to analyse light.

R. A. GREGORY.

Varieties.

"You have made many a pair of boots, I believe, for the Grand Old Man?"

"Oh yes. He has been here in this house often, for he actually himself used to bring his shoes to be repaired. He would knock at the door and call 'Bellis,' and if I was here up I would spring, for I knew his voice."

"Mr. Gladstone took a keen interest in everything pertaining to the village?"

"Yes; he would open the flower show, unless he was absent from the Castle. He rarely was absent then, because they arranged for it in August, after Parliament had risen. As to small village affairs, he left a great deal to Mrs. Gladstone. The villagers, if they had any trouble in which advice might be useful, could always see her, or, indeed, they might also see him. Ah! they were a beautiful couple. How they were devoted to each other! I'm sorry they are to be buried away from us—though I recognise the honour—but I'm glad the old man and the old lady are to lie side by side anyhow."

"What about the politics of the village?"

"Mr. Gladstone never interfered with politics so far as anybody was concerned. His wish always was that every man in the place should please himself—should hold just what views he thought right on political matters."

"No doubt you have seen Mr. Gladstone at tree-felling?"

"Why, his shoes have often come here cut with the axe, and I have wondered that he did not injure himself. When tree-felling, he would off with his coat and vest, and let his braces fall down from his shoulders. His sleeves would be unbuttoned, but he never rolled them up, and they would be flying in the wind with every stroke of the axe. Lord Napier of Magdala visited Hawarden Castle shortly after he came home from the Abyssinian war. The local volunteers were present as a guard of honour, and I was there as one of them. Mr. Gladstone had been felling a tree, and the job was not completed. He came over to the terrace to welcome Lord Napier, in his charming way, and then he immediately went back and completed his job."

"Why, he would just talk to you as if he was

nobody, and about anything ; no pride, nothing of that kind."

This (says the *Daily Chronicle* correspondent) was my friend the Hawarden shoemaker's final tribute to the master and leader he has lost.

A Baby Story. There is a curious baby story connected with All Hallows Barking, that interesting old church which has the offices built into it just behind the General Steam Navigation Company's house in Tower Street, at the corner of Seething Lane. It is very well told in Sir Walter Besant's "London." It happened that in the last month of Charles I's reign a certain ship-chandler in the neighbourhood became suddenly so foolish as to bury himself over a barrel of gunpowder with a candle. Naturally a spark fell into the barrel, and he was not even left long enough to express his regrets. Fifty houses were wrecked. How many persons were killed no one could tell, but at the next house but one, the Rose Tavern, there was a great company holding the parish dinner, and they all perished. Next morning, however, there was found on the leads of the church a young child in a cradle as newly laid in bed, neither child nor cradle having sustained the least harm. It was never known who the child was, but she was adopted by a gentleman of the parish and grew to womanhood.

A Custom of the Fish Trade. In our recent article on Grimsby, a sale of codfish by auction was described, but no intimation was given that by a peculiar custom fish are there sold in two different ways. Fish caught by the line boats, such as cod and halibut, are disposed of as described by ordinary auction, in which the buyers, by bidding against each other, gradually raise the price until the lot falls to the highest bidder. For a sturgeon caught in this way on the occasion in question the bids began at a sovereign and rose to thirty-eight shillings. But fish caught by the trawl boats, such as turbot and soles, are sold by what is known as Dutch auction, in which the process is the reverse, the salesman naming a price, and gradually lowering it until a buyer intimates the quotation suits him, so that the lot falls to him who speaks first. In the article, by a slip, the price of a sailing smack was given as £350 instead of £1,350.

Luther's last Will and Prayer. The following last will and prayer of Luther is recorded by Melchior Adam : "O Lord God, I thank Thee that Thou wouldst have me to be poor and a beggar upon the earth. I have no house, land, possession, or money to leave. Thou hast given me a wife and children : to Thee I return them ; nourish, teach, and save them, as hitherto Thou hast me, O Father of the fatherless and Judge of the widows ! O our Heavenly Father, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the God of all consolations, I thank Thee that Thou hast revealed Thy Son Jesus Christ to me, on Whom I have believed, Whom I have professed, Whom I have loved, Whom I have celebrated. . . . I pray Thee, O Lord Jesus Christ, receive my soul. My Heavenly Father, although I am taken out of this life, though

I must lay down this body, yet I certainly know that I shall dwell with Thee for ever, neither can I by any be plucked out of Thy hands. 'God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.'—John iii. 16 ; x. 28 ; 2 Timothy iv. 6, 7, 8."

Women's Meetings. "It is impossible to attend a meeting of women and not be impressed with

certain defects peculiar to audiences made up of women." So says the American *Outlook*. Similar observations have been heard on this side of the Atlantic. Our readers may be interested in this writer's suggestions. "Can anybody explain why a woman who gets early to a meeting should seat herself in a chair next the aisle and compel all later comers to pass her, causing both herself and them positive discomfort ? Any observer knows that you can go late into a hall where a women's meeting is convened, where there are hundreds of vacant seats, and yet find it almost impossible to reach these seats without causing some women to rise. The second discomfort is caused by women's hats. We hear about large hats at the theatre as if the discomfort they caused were peculiar to the theatre. The truth is that a large hat is a discomfort in any audience-room, and no well-bred woman should permit herself to wear a large hat trimmed with feathers at any meeting where her hat will by any possibility obstruct the view of the stage. We have frequently referred to the use of the voice in public—of the absolute ludicrousness of a woman getting up on her feet in public and speaking in so low a tone as not to be heard by her audience. This can be overcome. Any woman who has accepted an invitation to speak, or whose duties make it necessary that she should speak before an audience, should certainly learn to use her voice. To have a secretary get up before an audience and read a report so that she is unheard ten feet away from the platform is not an evidence of gentility or of timidity, but an evidence of lack of common sense. Every woman who appears in public should not only learn how to use her voice, but should also learn how to use a manuscript. If women are going to take public positions, they cannot wrap themselves about with the standards of their grandmothers as to what was elegant ; they must be elegant in the new position, and that means meeting all its requirements with thorough training.'

The article in the "Leisure Hour"
Umbrella-Bearing Ants. for March records the observations of one who had seen them in Brazil. It may be as well to mention that the umbrella-bearing ants, and many other entomological wonders, may be seen in the new insect house of the Zoological Society, Regent's Park.

The Discovery of America. In most books of history it is stated that America was discovered by the Northmen. Northmen about the year 1000, but details are seldom given. They are contained in a saga, or legend, called the *Saga of Red Eric*. Some

years before 1000 A.D. Icelanders had settled in Greenland, and it was from Greenland that voyagers set out to explore the coast further south. Several voyages were made between 1000 and 1011, and minute accounts are given of their discoveries. It is difficult to say how much of these accounts is true, and how much is due to the imagination of the sagewriter. He says that they called the land Wine-land, and that they found ripe grapes there. If this is to be relied upon they must have been a long way down the coast of the United States. They encountered the Esquimaux, who attacked them in their skin canoes ; and the description of the hair, eyes, and complexion of these people is true to the life. They did not see Red Indians, but the Esquimaux told them of people inhabiting the interior, who were dressed in buffalo robes. They spent more than one winter on the coast of America, far enough south to have daylight for many hours on the shortest day. No snow fell, and their cattle lived out in the open. These are the most interesting points in the narrative, apart from the personal adventures of the explorers, to narrate which would require considerable space.

The Sun rises at Greenwich on the Astronomical Notes for July, 1st day of this month at 3h. 49m. in the morning, and sets at 8h. 18m. in the evening ; on the 11th he rises at 3h. 57m. and sets at 8h. 13m. ; and on the 21st he rises at 4h. 10m. and sets at 8h. 2m. The Moon becomes Full at 9h. 12m. on the evening of the 3rd ; enters her Last Quarter at 4h. 43m. on the afternoon of the 10th ; becomes New at 7h. 47m. on the evening of the 18th ; and enters her First Quarter at 1h. 40m. on the afternoon of the

26th. She will be in perigee, or nearest the Earth, about 2 o'clock on the afternoon of the 3rd (on which day exceptionally high tides may be expected) ; in apogee, or farthest from us, about half-past 5 on that of the 16th ; and in perigee again about 11 o'clock on the night of the 31st. A partial eclipse of the Moon will take place on the evening of the 3rd, the greater part of which will be visible in this country ; the middle of the eclipse (when 0'93 of her diameter will be obscured) being at 9h. 18m. Greenwich time, exactly an hour after the Moon has risen there, and the last contact with the shadow taking place at 10h. 49m., so that the whole eclipse will be visible in Western Asia and the East of Europe and Africa. An annular eclipse of the Sun will take place on the 18th, but it will be visible only in the Western hemisphere, and will be best seen in South America. The planet Mercury may become visible after sunset towards the end of the month, in the constellation Leo ; he will pass very near the star Regulus on the 27th. Venus continues to increase in brightness as an evening star, passing in an easterly direction through the constellation Leo, but setting throughout the month less than two hours after the Sun. Mars is in Taurus and rises about midnight ; he will be not far from the Pleiades in the middle of the month. Jupiter is still in the western part of Virgo ; he will be very near the star Eta in that constellation in the 12th and 13th, and sets by the end of the month about half-past 9 o'clock in the evening. Saturn is still in the northern part of Scorpio, near its boundary with Ophiuchus ; he will be due south at 9 o'clock in the evening on the 11th and at 8 o'clock on the 26th, and in conjunction with the Moon on the 28th. — W. T. LYNN.

The Fireside Club.

GEOGRAPHICAL ACROSTIC

A prize of FIVE SHILLINGS is offered for the best answer in rhyme.

1. A Florentine, not lost to fame,
To a new world he gave his name.
2. With Cross and sword the white man came
And took this land in the name of Spain.
3. He wanders o'er the icy floes,
Fearing no frost or drifting snows.
4. From north to south these mountains lie,
Their stony peaks point to the sky.
5. Their courage gone, their spirits broke,
Their forests ta'en by other folk.
6. From perils great on stormy sea
Half the world he won as fee.
7. This river seeks its ocean home
Thro' forests dark where Indians roam.

THE WHOLE.

Within the limits of my whole you find
Nations and laws of every kind.

SHAKESPEARIAN ACROSTIC (SECOND SERIES).

FOURTH OF FIVE.

1. "Good sooth, she is
The queen of curds and cream."
2. "Do you not know I am a woman? When I
think I must speak."
3. "Behold divineness
No elder than a boy!"
4. "If thou dost love thy lord,
Banish the cancer of ambitious thoughts!"
5. "You are a spirit I know; when did you die?"
6. "You have a daughter . . .
Virtuous and fair, royal and gracious."
7. "Holy, fair, and wise is she."
8. "Renown'd in Padua for her scolding tongue."

THE WHOLE.

"The truest . . .
That ever swore her faith."

(Find each name indicated, and give Act and Scene of each quotation. A prize of TWO GUINEAS will be

awarded to the solver of this series. Should more than one competitor succeed, a sixth Acrostic will be given to work off the tie. For full particulars, see last month.)

ANSWERS FOR MAY.

(See p. 474.)

THE JOYS OF JUNE.

Many bright and pleasing sets of verses were composed by the Club on this evidently congenial theme. One or two writers, otherwise circumspect, fell into the trap the Editor had laid for them in using *the* (inadmissible because a rhyme for *tree*), and so spoilt quite prizeworthy poems. We are sure our readers will think a competition successful which has inspired the following prize verses, and will admire the ingenuity with which their author has avoided all forbidden words and rhymes :

THE JOYS OF JUNE.

"O come and view my joys anew," so whispered gracious June,
"My meadow sweet is at your feet, my songsters are
in tune ;
Each forest glade shall lend you shade when sun-
beams fiercest fall,
I've carpets spread to tempt your tread, I've blessings
for you all.

"Yon mower blithe shall swing his scythe and scent
my balmy gales.
And milkmaids pass, each sunburnt lass with treasure
in her pails.
My roses pink shall make you think that Flora's
lips have pressed them.
If cloudless skies should tire your eyes my drowsy
eyes shall rest them.

"I've healthy joys for ruddy boys, and sports on
village greens ;
I've picnic glades for laughing maids and crowns
for rustic queens ;
Mount, minstrel larks ; o'er streams and parks your
herald anthems fling ;
Let tidings go, let mortals know what varied joys
I bring !"

JAMES EMMOTT, 29 Jowett St., Bradford.

ANSWER TO THE SIXTH (SPECIAL) SHAKESPEARIAN ACROSTIC OF THE FIRST SERIES.

The words italicised in the following passages were those required :

1. "True HOPE is swift, and flies with swallow's wings."
Kings it makes gods, and meaner creatures kings." Rich. III., Act Five, Scene Two.
2. "A sad tale's best for winter. . . . Come on, then and give it me in my EAR." Winter's Tale, Act Two, Scene One.
3. "There is no consonancy in the sequel; that suffers under probation: *A* should follow." Twelfth Night, Act Two, Scene Five.
4. "Here she let fall a tear, here in this place I'll set a bank of RUE." Rich. II., Act Three, Scene Four.
5. "My THOUGHTS do harbour with my Silvia nightly, And slaves they are to me that send them flying." Two Gentlemen of Verona, Act Three, Scene One.

THE WHOLE.

With bracelets of thy hair, rings, gauds, conceits,
Knacks, trifles, nosegays, sweetmeats, messengers
Of strong prevailment in unhardened youth,
With cunning hast thou sithed my daughter's
HEART."

Mids. Night Dream, Act One, Scene One.

Only seven of the ten surviving competitors in this series entered for the special acrostic, and of these only one was successful in giving a perfectly correct answer. To her, MISS LILIAN SHORT, Adrian Villa, Park Road, Hampton Hill, the Editor has much pleasure in awarding the prize of TWO GUINEAS. Some of the lights in the unsuccessful answers were very ingenious (*Earth, Egypt, England, Tooth, Herb, etc.*), but none were good enough to be admitted as alternatives.

TEA-TABLE TOPICS.—The prizewinner for this month is M. G. DIXON, St. Botolph's, Ryde.

RULES.—I. Write very clearly, on one side; fasten sheets of each competition by itself, with name and address on each. Write FIRESIDE CLUB on all letters.

II. Editor's decisions are final. Correspondence is quite impossible. In applying for prizes, winners must write PRIZEWINNER outside envelope.

III. All answers must be received by the 20th of the month.

TEA-TABLE TOPICS.

"Happy and Curious." It is very easy, when words are not familiar, to make slight mistakes which materially alter the sense. An English-woman, teaching in a foreign family on the Continent, was once much surprised when one of her little pupils asked, "If it is naughty to be curious, why is the Queen of England so curious?" She asked what he meant. "Because," he replied, "you always sing, 'Happy and curious, Long to reign over us, God save the Queen!'"—SPEEDWELL.

A Cure for Taciturnity. Loquacity, though it does run in families, is not very infectious. A silent person thrown into a family of great talkers will mostly steal into some quiet backwater of reflection and let the stream of conversation flow by. He feels overpowered. Much courted as a listener, no one wants him to talk—they can all do that. The infirmity of taciturnity (if it be an infirmity) is best cured when two silent ones have to live together. After a while they begin to feel that a dead calm may be as bad as a storm. A remark from one of them will wake up the other: he feels bound to make reply. Gradually the gaps fill up, till insensibly, to their ultimate surprise, they begin to converse, and are as other men.—M. A. G.

"You love nursie, don't you?" I A Child's asked a boy of six, expecting an answer Paradise. in the affirmative. "Well, yes," he said, hesitatingly, "only—she won't let us be dirty!" adding, with a sudden burst of confidence, and a sigh after vanished joys, "In America [i.e. on the far ranche where his first home had been, and where nurses were unknown]—in America we were always dirty!"—RACONTEUR.

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